

DISCLAIMER: That part of this world and those characters you've seen before belong to their Creator: JKR. The rest is mine - although I cannot quit my day job as I make no \$\$\$

WARNING!

THIS FICTION IS RATED M FOR MATURE! There is course language barred by the FCC, explicit sexual situations and there will be violence (later). For those who have read my other works, this is not tame.

For those who waited for my Harry/Harem fic...

## INTRODUCTION

This story begins just after the Battle at the Department of Mysteries in OoTP. It is very AU from that point. It is MOSTLY Canon before, but not entirely. This is or will be Harry/Multi. Hermione will be a player.

Hermione might seem a little OOC, as this Hermione has a really dirty mind...and finally a way to express it. Then again, we really never knew what she was thinking, did we?

This is a "partial" response to the "Slave Challenge" posted by Ranger Dragan (I think) some time ago. It has been mentioned in my profile and as I hit a bit of writer's block on my ongoing other fic (30 Minutes) I decided to get this one going.

The Challenge bits I accept are that Harry finds himself with "slaves." They all have to be girls, and there have to be two from each house at Hogwarts. Done, and done beyond. Dumbledore has to be a right bastard. Done. Weasley bashing. Sorry, can't bash them all, but some are Done. Harry finds himself in these circumstances thanks to Sirius. Done. He's allowed to brutalize his "slaves." Okay, here's where I depart. I have no problem with Harry going medieval on someone (and he will), but not on someone who's loyal to him. (Otherwise he's just Voldie Jr.) So no beatings of his girls, sorry. Copious amounts of sex? Yes. But no beatings.

His magic must be bound. Done. He must have been defrauded out of his inheritance up to now. Done. He inherits and island floating around in the Atlantic - kind of done.

Some scenes might be considered “fem slash,” but they are explained.

My notion of Harry having a sibling does appear. This Clarice is a minor character used more to show just how vicious certain people are.

This fic assumes a world that is grossly male dominated and oriented, where women (witches) are considered chattel. There was a time when this would have been close to reality in history, but the degree here is beyond even the historic perspective and I happen to find it offensive in the extreme, but it is a plot point so I’m stuck with it.

Now the challenge suggested Harry should be a right bastard himself. Guess I fail on that count.

The next bit will save you from having to read 30 or more chapters to figure this out:

#### DEFINITIONS:

Magical Guardian. Always a wizard. A magical guardian controls the life of his wards. A boy is subjected to such guardianship until age 17. A girl is subject to it until she is bonded to a wizard in any manner (or becomes a Consort). The magical guardian can bind his wards into marriage contracts or sell his witches as concubines. It is the father, if the father is a wizard. If a child has no wizard father, it can be decided by Will. Otherwise, it vests in the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot.

Marriage. Any legal or magical reciprocal bonding between a man and a woman intended to be permanent and created either for love or family. This is a form of contractual relationship differentiated only by the nature of the contract.

Marriage at Law. This is not a magical bond. It is analogous to non-magical marriages. The magical elites favor this over magical bond because magical bond are seen to inhibit the Wizard. In an at law marriage, his wife cannot have control over him, whereas under a magical bond, they are truly one. It is also used by lower classes, since the conditions for formation of a magical bond are rather severe and, particularly among Muggle Borns, the rite is - unnerving. Like us, this is a union that can end in divorce or annulment.

Consort Bond. A magical bond between a witch and a man. It is predicated upon love and it is mutual. This bond is always initiated by the witch and must be openly accepted by the man to take hold. They must love each other and be willing to subordinate themselves to the other. The bonding is a sexual ritual (hence Muggle Born reluctance). The result is a union that has never broken. This is a bond that if entered into voids all unexecuted contracts for marriage or concubines. The bond suppresses certain aspects of free will in both parties, namely their desire for sex outside of their bond. A wizard can have more than one woman, but not without his Consort's knowledge or consent. (He won't even be attracted to them otherwise.) In this regard, the wizard does have more freedom (provided she gives him that) as the witch will never desire or accept another mate. This bond truly is for life and cannot be (nor has it ever been) broken.

Concubine Bond. The magical guardian of a young witch can sell her off as a concubine. For all practical purposes, this is a slave. She is bound involuntarily to a wizard and short of harming herself, will do whatever her "Master" wants. This bond came into being because there were far more witches than wizards and while it might be possible in such a "target rich" dating environment for the wizard to find his life mate, the witches were not so lucky. This bond was to make sure a witch did not need to get hitched to a Muggle (and risk being burned or worse) as she could be bound to a wizard as a member of his family. The bond became perverted with the rise of Pureblood ideals and was turned into a means for subjugating Muggle Borns and for the baser pleasures of Pureblood Masters. (In other words, the concubines became the magical sex trade and were the working women of the brothels.)

The bonding is, for lack of a better word, a form of ritualized rape as in most cases the witch is not consenting to the bond.

However, the bond is what the wizard makes it and can become a reciprocal, love based bond if they both desire it, in which case it is almost legally and magically indistinguishable from marriage (and should it take that form, the wizard will not be inclined to share his witch for profit or otherwise).

The Bond is permanent. The witch will always be a concubine. Her bond cannot be broken, only transferred to another wizard.

In the best cases, it really doesn't matter. In the worst (and most cases are) it's just sick.

LOVE BOND. A rite between a concubine and a wizard that transforms their bond into a bond similar to that of a Consort. Where the bond is performed, the Concubine becomes the wife and her Master becomes her Husband. She must love him and he must love her in order for the bond to form.

## CONCLUSION OF INTRODUCTION

That being said, Harry will have both Concubines and Consorts. What he does with them ... read on.

At the end of each chapter there will be a note of the current Harem(s) so you can keep track. Each chapter will also have a note at the beginning if they are individually rated M as to why. So again, THIS FIC IS RATED M. If you're not old enough, STOP NOW.

## CHAPTER ONE: DECEPTION

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1996, Number 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey UK

Fifteen year old Harry Potter lay in his bed pissed off at the entire world. It was his first day back from boarding school and it had arguably been the worst year of his entire life, which was saying a lot because the boy had a pretty rotten life before hand. He hated Privet Drive and the relatives whom he lived with. He had come to live with his Aunt and Uncle when he was fifteen months old and his life had sucked pretty much ever since.

He had absolutely no fond memories of his childhood. From as early as he can remember, he had been physically abused by his Uncle and later by his Cousin, mentally abused by the whole ruddy family and neglected and malnourished. He didn't know his own name until he first went to Primary School. Until then, he thought he was "Boy" or "Freak." Food for him was a luxury until then and it was only being sent to school that had resulted in him getting much to eat at all.

At age eleven, he found out his entire life had been one big lie. The revelation came when he learned that he was a wizard, that his parents had died defending him from an evil wizard and not in a car crash following a week long drinking binge and that he was going to learn magic. Still, it now seemed to Harry that every time some truth about him was revealed there were more lies to discover. Ever since he learned his relatives had been lying to them he had been hoping against hope he would never have to return, yet every fucking year he found himself back in the smallest bedroom on the street, locked in, staring at the ceiling and being isolated from anyone who actually liked him.

Up until now, last summer had been the worst. He witnessed the return of the most evil wizard in history, fought the bastard to a standstill, watched another student die needlessly and reported the events to not just his Headmaster but the Minister for Magic himself. What happens? He's sent back to this shit hole and learns that no one is allowed to write or say anything to him about anything that was happening outside the four walls. The Ministry and Wizarding Press

brand him an insane liar. A vindictive ministry bitch sets him up and the Minister for Magic uses his act of self defense as an excuse to try and get him chunked into prison. His Headmaster, whom he trusted, ignores him all year and refuses to tell him why. Even when he was reunited with his Godfather and friends, he was certain they weren't telling him everything.

He gets back to school and finds the vindictive bitch who tried to chuck him in prison is now one of his teachers. He also learns she's into torture and now has the scars to prove it. He gets kicked off the Quidditch Team, which was the only thing left that he enjoyed. Most of the school believes he's insane and the number of people who do not could be counted on one hand. He makes the mistake of going out with a girl who only wanted to be with him to learn how her last boyfriend had died. He suffered through months of supposedly important Occlumency lessons, designed to protect his mind from magical attack from the evil wizard, but given by the one teacher at school he actually hated and who he was convinced hated him. The lessons had not worked and Harry was convinced the git was actually doing the opposite of what he was led to believe: making it easier for the evil bastard to attack.

He then gets tricked into rescuing his Godfather who was just fine. He gets drawn into a trap and drags his only friends with him. It was only by a miracle that none of them were killed, but all of them were injured, two of them severely. Worst of all, his Godfather comes to help him as he's in a fight with Death Eaters, all bent on killing him and his friends, and gets killed for caring about Harry - a theme in his rotten life.

After what the papers were now calling the Battle at the Department of Mysteries, he has a long "chat" with his Headmaster. If the old bastard had not been lying to him all these years, he had been withholding vital information, clouding the issues with half truths and otherwise proving the geezer could not be trusted. Harry had been livid. Worse, he learned about a Prophecy, one which had resulted in his parents being killed and his hell for a life. He was supposed to be some god damned superhero sent to save the world from the evil wizard, according to the prophecy. He never wanted that. All he wanted was a normal life. Now he's some kind of savior who, he

thought, is probably dead meat. Yeah, he'll beat the bastard and kill him once and for all, but he'll probably die in the process. His reaction to this hell? He practically destroyed the Headmaster's office. While it felt good at the time, it did not change a fucking thing.

What almost topped it all off was that even though Harry wanted to be with friends right now having lost one of the true father figures in his life, what's the Old Man do? Disregards his wishes and chucks him right back into this prison, for that's what Privet Drive really was, a cage to keep him "safe." Blood Wards my ASS!, Harry thought. They work on love? There isn't an ounce of that in this fucking house! At first he accepted this fate. It was only for a month or so, just until his sixteenth Birthday and then he could leave and spend the rest of the summer with the Weasleys. Then, the thought crossed his mind.

If this place was the only place he could be safe from Voldemort and his Death Eaters, then why the hell was he allowed to leave AT ALL? He knew he was being lied to again. He just could not figure out what the lie was trying to cover.

Just when Harry thought it couldn't get any worse, it did. Following his raging fit in the Headmaster's Office, he went to the hospital wing to check on his friends. Three of them had been released, but his two best friends were still unconscious.

Ron Weasley had an encounter with unknown magic that had messed with his brain and Madam Pomphrey did not know if the damage was temporary or permanent. If it was permanent, Ron would spend the rest of his life in a hospital.

The curse that Harry thought had killed Hermione Granger had nearly done just that. She would recover. Still, she would be lucky to go home with the rest of the school in a few days. For the rest of the term Harry never left her side. He held her hand and talked to her day and night, just as he had done Second Year when she lay in the Hospital petrified from an attack by a Basilisk. As he sat there, he remembered that time. He remembered her Third Year, Fourth Year and this year. He remembered what he had felt when he saw her get hit by that curse and thought she was dead.

She was the one person who was always there for him, even when he didn't want her to be. She always stood up for him and beside him. She always went out of the way to help him. The few times he had ever been angry with her, it was because she had tried to help him and keep him safe when he was just being selfish. He thought about it. Ron was not that way at all. The bastard had all but disowned him when he got into the Tri-Wizard Tournament. He was always jealous of Harry: jealous of his fame; jealous of the fact Harry had money; jealous of the fact that Harry had actually kissed a girl; jealous of the fact that if Harry wanted he could probably shag any girl at Hogwarts. Hermione knew he wanted none of that. She understood him perhaps better than he understood himself. She was the only person who could hug him or kiss him without making him feel uncomfortable at all. True, they had never actually snogged, but she had kissed him on the cheek more times that he could count, going all the way back to First Year.

He thought long and hard about that as she lay there. He thought about the fact that both his friends might be on their death beds, and yet he needed to be by Hermione's side. Why? It then hit him like a ton of bricks. He loved her. He loved her and only her. Since when? Since First Year, he figured. Second year for certain, he knew. Did she love him too? He knew that she did. She never acted the way she did for and around him with anyone, and all of that, the help, support, hugs, kisses, touching, that was not a sister and brother thing, that was an "I love you" thing. He had just been too stupid and self absorbed to see that the most wonderful girl he knew, the one that he loved more than life itself, loved him right back. That ends now! He thought. As soon as she wakes up, I'm going to tell her and ask her to be my girl! And if it means Ron never speaks to me again, he can just sod off!

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 1996, Hospital Wing, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Ron had woken up the day before. Despite that, Harry all but ignored him. He was too worried about Hermione. He could feel Ron glaring at him as he sat next to Hermione, holding her hand, brushing her impossible brown hair, begging her to come back to him. He didn't care. He didn't care that Ron all but freaked that Harry had only left



her side to use the loo and had slept in the chair next to her since the previous Saturday night, the night of the Battle. He didn't care what Ron thought about it!

Harry was sleeping beside Hermione's bed when she awoke. She felt someone holding her hand and looked in surprise at who it was. She could see that it looked like he had been there for days. 'He loves me,' her heart screamed. 'He's here! He's with me! I'm not alone! I - I know I love him too!'

"Harry?" she whispered.

"Mmmm," a grumble came back.

"I love you, Harry," she whispered again.

"Love you too," the still sleeping boy murmured. "Always have," he added. "Marry me, Hermione?"

"WHAT?" Ron yelled.

Harry was startled out of his perfect dream. "What?" he said.

"Oi! You asked her to marry you?" Ron almost yelled, "you asked my girl to marry you?"

"Your girl?" Hermione almost shrieked, "what the bloody hell are you talking about, Ronald!"

"You are," Ronald said. "Your mine, so Harry hands off!"

"Look Ronald, that's not how it works!"

"Really? I think it does!"

"What makes you think I'm your girl?"

"I like you. End of story. I like you and Harry gets everything."

"You're such an idiot! It's not 'end of story!' What makes you think I would even want to be your girl? You can barely stand me! We fight all the time!"

"But that's the fun of it," Ron began.

"It's not fun to me, Ronald! It hurts! It shows me you have no respect for me, my feelings, my thoughts, my dreams, nothing. You're a fucking lazy bastard too! You seem to expect me to do your homework for you and..."

"You help Harry too!"

"He always asks, and it's different. I don't do his work, I look it over! You expect me to do it for you! You usually don't bother to ask at all and the only time that you do is if we've just had a row! You think I want that in my life? You think I need that? You ignore me in public! You eat like a pig! There's nothing about you that would argue in favor of being your girl.

"AND! If you must know, Ronald. I love Harry."

"Like a brother," Ron started.

"No Ron. Not like that. Harry asked me to marry him. Do you want to know my answer?"

"No."

"TOO BAD! My answer is YES!"

"Really?" both Harry and Ron asked, Harry in joy and surprise, and Ron in shock and anger.

"BUT, he'll have to be my boyfriend first and not until we've finished school, but otherwise YES!"

"Fine," Ron snarled. Neither Harry or Hermione heard him mutter under his breath: "This isn't over. Hermione's mine!"

"I love you," Harry whispered to his new girlfriend.

"Oh shut up and kiss me, Harry," Hermione said with a smile. To her delight he did. She actually thought she felt her heart stop for a moment. She had never kissed a boy like this on the lips before. It was wonderful! She moaned slightly. Amazing, she thought, considering Harry's grand total of romantic kisses before was one, a few months back with Cho Chang. Maybe it comes natural for him, she thought. And if he's this good at kissing, WOW! She thought as she moaned again.

"Wow," they both said when they finally came back for air. For the first time since he had known her, he heard Hermione actually giggle.

"We need to do that more often," Harry offered.

"Well, it's not like I'm going anywhere, Love," Hermione giggled again. Harry took the hint.

This time when they broke apart, Hermione bit her lip and gazed into her new boyfriend's eyes. "Um Harry," she said nervously.

"Yes?"

"Um, I know how you hate going to your relatives in the Summer and ... well ... I kind of wrote Mum and Dad and asked if you could spend the Holidays with us."

"You did?"

Hermione nodded. "And they agreed! Isn't that wonderful?" Harry's face fell. "Harry, what's wrong? I think it's a brilliant plan!"

"It is Hermione," Harry replied, "it's just that...damn that bastard!"

"Who? Voldemort?"

"No, Dumbledore!"

“Dumbledore?”

“He says I have no choice! I have to go back to the Dursleys. No choice at all!”

“Why?”

“It’s the only place where I’m safe, he says. I think he’s full of it, but there’s nothing I can do. Whole damn Order is going to make sure I go there and stay there ‘til my birthday and then it’s off to the Burrow.”

“Harry, I’m sorry,” Hermione said.

“Not your fault.”

“No. But I’m still sorry. I got my hopes up and all...”

“Hermione, we’ll think of something.”

“I suppose.”

“But, in case we don’t, we might as well stock up on kissing to tide us over for the next month or so.”

“I like the way you think, Potter,” Hermione said pulling him back to her.

The two kept snogging until Madam Pomphrey chased Harry from the Hospital Wing a few hours later, but not before Harry promised to “practice” with Hermione the whole train ride back to London.

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1996, 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey UK

It could have been the best vacation of his life. He could have spent the entire summer with Hermione and explored this new relationship they had. It should have been the best train ride of his life with his old yet new girlfriend in his arms and her lips against his. Neville and Luna seemed perfectly at ease with the new direction Harry and Hermione were taking, perhaps even supportive, not that Harry or

Hermione bothered to ask. They had more pressing things to do with their mouths. What put a damper on their fun were Ron and Ginny. The few times Harry took a break from those luscious lips, he could see them glaring at him and Hermione. It made things uncomfortable enough that Harry decided not to take too many breaks and Hermione did not seem to mind in the slightest.

Now, he was stuck here in this prison on orders of his Headmaster. He would be here for at least a month if the old bastard had his way. After that, he would be at the Weasleys where, fair bet, either Hermione would not be invited or they would not be allowed any cuddle time, much less any serious alone time. Hermione seemed as devastated about the turn of events as Harry had been and even hinted, had things been different, Harry would have gotten a sixteenth birthday present from her he would never, ever forget.

"You?" he remembered asking.

She nodded and smiled. "All of me," she whispered back.

"Damn it all, girl! Why tell me this now?"

"Motivation," she smiled.

"Motivation?"

"To figure away to come and get me, silly."

"Ohhhh!" Harry realized. "At last, something to do! You're really wonderful, you know."

"Took you long enough."

"Only to tell you, Love. I've known all this time."

Yeah, Harry thought. But first I need to figure out what is really going on with my life. Questions. He had so many questions he wanted answered. Dumbledore had seemed to answer many of them, but the more Harry thought about it, the more he realized there were so many pieces missing. The answers seemed random and even

contradictory, as if the Old Man was merely trying to appease him without telling him anything of consequence. It was bloody infuriating!

Harry went over to his small desk and took out a notepad and regular Muggle pen he had bought ages ago but had never used. He was certain they might have been in his stuff since even before first went off to Hogwarts. Fortunately, the pen worked:

## QUESTIONS:

Number 1: Godrics Hollow.

How could Dumbledore not know Pettigrew was a Death Eater? The man's a master of Legillimency! It's possible that Pettigrew didn't become one until long after my parents were in hiding and never ran into the old man, still.

Why Pettigrew? Sirius said he was the obvious choice, but that made Pettigrew a better choice. Yet I met the man! He's a bloody coward!

What kinds of protections were on that place? Were there others that could have been used and weren't and if not why not?

Why were there no guards? I've got guards! Can't see them, but I hear them out there!

Number 2: After.

Sirius Black goes to prison without a trial? All you had to do was look at his left forearm! He's not a marked Death Eater! Besides, with Veritaserum and Legilimency, they could have found the truth! Instead, he rots for twelve years and his case remained untried. What the bloody hell was Dumbledore doing as head of the Wizengamot?

Number 3: Privet Drive.

Dumbledore said something about wards. But he also said for them to work I have to see this dump as my "home." I've never seen it as a home! Never! Prison, yes, home? No. So I guess there are no wards then.

Surely I could have been sent to someone else! Did my parents actually want me here? Did they even have a say? If not, why not?

Mrs. Figg is here to keep an eye on me, or so she said, for Dumbledore. I went there often over the years, battered and bruised and underfed. I thought her a bit mental, but she always patched me up and made me feel better. Didn't Dumbledore know? She must have told him. So then why didn't he do anything about it?

And shouldn't the fact that my first Hogwarts Letter was addressed to me in the Cupboard Under The Stairs have screamed investigation?

Number 4: My Entry Into the Wizarding World.

Why was it that when I entered the Leaky Cauldron and Diagon Alley for the first time, everybody knew who I was practically? Did I have some flashing neon sign on my head that I didn't know about that said: "Look at me! I'm Harry Fucking Potter?" I had lived in the Muggle World for 10 years! Before that, I was in hiding with my parents! There's no way I should have been known. True, there is the scar, but it's not THAT noticeable, is it?

Same thing on the train! Everybody seemed to know who I was. I could understand Ron - maybe. He grew up hearing those fucked up stories about me. But Hermione? She recognized me right off! She'd been a Muggle her whole life!! Well, at least she didn't make a fuss like everyone else - yet one of the many reasons I fell for her!

Speaking about the train. How come Hagrid never told me how to get onto the Platform? Why'd I have to wait until I got lucky enough to run into a wizarding family? Hermione never told me she had that problem too. And is it just me, or was it merely a coincidence that it was the Weasleys?

Number 5: First Year.

Fool me once, shame on you! Fool me twice, shame on me! Okay, maybe Dumbledore didn't have a chance to discover Pettigrew was a Death Eater, but Quirrell? How could he not know Quirrell was

sharing his body with Voldemort? He had to have known, which begs the question why didn't he do anything? Why'd he leave it to me to kill the son-of-a-bitch? Bit much for an eleven year old, don't you think?

Next, Hagrid said there's no place safer than Gringotts, 'cept maybe Hogwarts. Safe my arse! Why would any idiot hide the most coveted magical item in history in a bloody school full of curious and nosey children? Dumbledore was trying to keep it from Voldie-Squirrel, and he hides it so well! How does he protect it? With traps that three First Years easily got past! That makes a lot of sense!

And was Hagrid in on the fix? Seems every time we were stumped, he'd drop us a clue, and yet he can keep secrets when he wants to...

#### Number 6: The Fucking Prophecy!

Okay, so I only learned about this one recently. But it seems apt to bring it up now. According to that rubbish, I am the only person in the world who can defeat Voldemort. True, there is some proof of this. I have either defeated or fought some version of the sod to a standstill five times! Still, one would think I'd receive some kind of training to be the evil wizard killer, right? It seems every year I get into a tussle with the Sod, yet do I get any training? The only training I've had was on my own or with Hermione! (One more reason why I love her - actually almost all my training is with her!)

#### Number 7: Second Year.

I'd like to give Dumbledore some credit for not being able to control this one, but I can't. He fucking knew the Chamber of Secrets was real! And don't tell me he had no idea what was down there! Hermione figured that one out with the scant information we had! He knew Slytherin was a Parselmouth and that Tom was one too. He knew that until this year the Chamber had only opened when there was a Parselmouth at school. He knew that it had never been found by anyone else.

Conclusion? The Chamber was hidden by some charm that could only be opened by a Parselmouth. It wasn't even pass worded! The word "open" was all that was required. AND, he knew I was one too!



He could have told me that! He could have told me there was a sixty foot long basilisk lurking down there that was three times as tall as I was when it reared up! He could have told me the easy way to kill the ruddy snake. (Crowing Roosters) No! At twelve I had to run the beast through with a sword! Damn near snuffed it right then and there!

Is that why he seemed surprised to see me when we got out? Did he think I was going to die?

And what was with that gleam he had when he saw Riddle's Diary?

Number 8: The Wards Again!

Let's see: Summer after first year I spend a month at the Weasleys. After second, a month in Diagon Alley - like that's bloody safe! Third, we spent part of the time at the Weasleys and the rest at the Quidditch World Cup that was crawling with Death Eaters. Christmas that year at the Weasleys! Fourth summer and this past Christmas at Grimmauld Place. If the Wards at Privet Drive are so damned important, why am I not here all the time when away from school?

Number 9: Third Year.

Two questions:

First, how could the Weasleys and by extension Dumbledore not be suspicious of Scabbers? They had that rat for twelve years when the life expectancy of a rat is four at the most! (Hermione looked that one up. What would I do without her? Die, most like.)

Second, this was the Year that I lost any hope or faith in the Magical government (as if last summer was not a clue?) When they caught Sirius, a man not even formally charged (Hermione looked that up) much less convicted of anything, they were going to have him summarily and immediately put to death. Call it what you like, having your soul sucked out is execution! At least Dumbledork allowed us to prevent that miscarriage of justice. But did he do more? Head of the Wizengamot, the high court, the legislature? NO!

Then there's Remus. Best teacher I had in Defense bar none. Only one who tried to really help me. Forced to resign for a minor and controllable medical condition that never impacted his abilities as a teacher! Fucking Malfoys! Who died and made them king? If it were me, the lot of them would be flogged!

Number 10: Fourth Year.

Where do I begin?

Quidditch World Cup! A handful of drunk Death Eaters against tens of thousands and not one of them is even captured? Had this happened in the Real World, none of them would be alive. If the fans didn't kill the lot with their bare hands, the cops would have put so many bullets into them that their remains would have needed to be scooped up with a shovel! Far as I know, I can't put direct blame on Dumbledore for that fiasco! Fuck the Wizarding World. Bunch of bloody cowards the lot of them! They proclaim me a Savior when it suits them. God helps those who help themselves! The more I think about it, the more I want to leave them behind and let them ROT! (Provided I can take Hermione with me, of course. She's the only person in this world worth saving!)

Moody. Supposed to be one of Dumbledore's oldest friends and yet Barty Crouch, Jr. is able to fool the old geezer for a year? Bullshit!

Tri-Wizard: McGonagall demanded an investigation! Dumbledore shot her down. Decided to see how things went! Damn it, I never wanted to be a part of that! NEVER! I thought you had to assent to a magical contract in SOME manner!

(My BIG mistake was not asking Hermione to the Yule Ball. Damn was she beautiful that night!)

Still, one would think I'd get a little help. Okay, I did - from Hermione.

Second Task: What bloody sick ass bastard thought Ron was the one thing I'd miss the most. Damn it! Had Krum not rescued her, I would have AND I WOULD HAVE AND LEFT RON BEHIND! Something tells me the sick ass bastard was Dumbledore.

Cedric Diggory. Why does his death bother me? I didn't actually kill him. Pettigrew did. I've killed two men already and never even think about them at all. I certainly don't dream about their deaths. I didn't even know Cedric. I guess it's because I couldn't stop the obvious. Perhaps Hermione's right, I got a saving people thing.

We had just portkeyed into God knows where. I was already injured and had a bad landing and blew out my knee. I was disoriented, in pain and hadn't time to get a lay for the battlefield at all. I told Cedric to get out, 'cause I couldn't help him and knew it, and he had to act the part of the hero and stand his ground and get snuffed! I barely remember getting back. Voldemort was back and Cedric was dead. His parents were - it was a total loss for them. I guess that's why it still haunts me.

This is War. In War there are only two rules:

Rule One: People die.

Rule Two: You can't change Rule One.

Why don't I want to believe that? (And why doesn't Dumbledore and the others know that Rule One is and absolute? It's KILL OR BE KILLED, PERIOD!) From now on, no prisoners! No mercy! The enemy has two choices from me: unconditional surrender or death! If the rest of the Wizarding World thinks otherwise, LET THEM ROT!

Harry stopped and closed the notebook. He was tired and would leave the rest of his questions for later. For now, he picked up a quill and parchment to write a letter to Hermione.

My Dearest Hermione:

Did I tell you I love you?

You are the reason I wake up in the mornings and the reason I continue on through this madness. Without you, none of this is worth it. I do love you so much and would rather be kissing you and holding you than thinking about it while I write.

I've been thinking of things while I've been missing you so terribly. Yes, it's only been a few hours. Damn it, this summer could have been PERFECT! But I'm stuck here!

I've been thinking about things. Things that make no sense. I will tell you, Love, but I've only just begun to try and make some kind of sense about them. I promise, soon, I will send you my thoughts on this. Okay?

I'm also trying to think of ways for us to be together even if only for a little while this summer. Keep faith in me, Love, I've only just begun to think of - possibilities. My fear is that when I am released from this prison, I'll be sent to Weasley hell. I fear that this year, you will receive no invite. Don't know about you, but Ron and Ginny seemed a bit off. Regardless, it is my intention to be with you this summer and for the rest of my life! Count on it! (And I mean the rest of a real life! Decades and decades of us!)

I pray that I dream of you tonight and always.

I love you!

Harry.

P.S: I have a really bad feeling, Hermione. Something's up with Ron and I don't know what it is but I don't like it. Please promise me you will not go to the Weasleys unless you know I am already there. Please, Hermione? I couldn't live with myself if something were to happen that I could have stopped.

Harry put the letter into an envelope and opened the large bird cage looking at the snowy owl inside that had been watching him with interest. The owl hopped out of the cage and onto Harry's shoulder and seemed to hold her leg out. Harry tied the letter to its leg.

"It's for Hermione, Hedwig," Harry said. "Wait for the reply."

Hedwig gave a low hoot and flew out the open window of Harry's bedroom and into the night.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)Hermione Jane Granger, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96.

## CHAPTER TWO: ESCAPING THE LIES

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1996, 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surrey UK

Nymphadora Tonks was a twenty-one and almost twenty-two year old witch. She had hated her first name all her life and preferred to be called "Tonks." Family and close friends were allowed to call her "Dora." Only her Mum called her by that other name and only when she was angry.

Tonks was a metamorphagus, which was a rare magical ability that allowed her to change her appearance at will. She had mastered this gift and could so alter her appearance as to be unrecognizable. If she touched the bare skin of any person and allowed her magic to connect with them, she could assume their form exactly and on command. It was a very useful gift to have in her line of work. She was an Auror, a hunter of Dark Wizards for the Ministry of Magic. Undercover work and disguises were an essential part of her job and although she had only been a full qualified Auror for less than two years, she was the best in the Department at undercover work.

She was also a member of the Order of the Phoenix. She joined within days of Voldemort's return to physical form. As a member of the Order, she did what was asked to help prevent Voldemort from gaining power or followers. In her case, this included passing classified Ministry materials on to the Order, a crime which, should she get caught, could land her in Azkaban Prison for a very long time. But she and some others took the risk for they believed the Ministry's do nothing attitude would be the ruin of all.

Right now, she was working for the Order. Her mission was simple. She was to keep an eye on the one person the Order was intent on protecting for now: Harry Potter. It turned out, this would allow her to accomplish her most important mission, one which neither the Ministry nor the Order knew anything about.

She stood in Harry's bedroom. She was in her true form for once. She stood five foot seven, with shoulder length, light brown hair. She usually morphed her breasts into a smaller size. She felt that her ample bust got more attention than she did. Tonight, her bust was it's

normal, rather large size. She had an excellent, if slightly top-heavy figure thanks to the physical exercise required of Aurors. She was wearing "Muggle Attire." It was a casual summer outfit with a low cut tee shirt and shorts that revealed her shapely legs. She wore trainers with ankle socks on her feet. She also had a handbag.

She had come to wake the sleeping teen up. But in the light from her wand, she noticed the notebook on the desk. She read through the questions and suppositions of the young man sleeping but a couple of feet away.

Very perceptive, she thought. This might go easier than we had hoped. She then looked at the sleeping boy. No one should have been forced to live your life, young Harry. You should have either had a normal life or you should have been trained to fulfill this horrible destiny. Your questions and more will be answered really soon, although I am afraid you will not like the truth one bit. Your life in the dark is over, young Master. You shall soon enter the light. She placed the notebook in the handbag.

It was time to wake the boy and lead him towards a new path in life.

Harry was having, without a doubt, the strangest dream he could remember. It was odd, wonderful and highly erotic. He was with Hermione, always a nice thought. It was Third Year again, maybe. They were riding on the back of the Hippogriff named Buckbeak, just as they had when they rescued Sirius from impending execution. However, this time was different. First of all, they were both naked. Secondly, they were making love as Buckbeak flew through the skies. Cool, Harry thought and then the dream vanished.

"Harry!" a woman's voice called. Harry could feel a hand shaking his shoulder. "Harry! Wake up!" the voice called urgently.

"Whaaa?" Harry groaned having been yanked out of that wonderful if strange dream. He opened his eyes knowing he would see nothing clearly without his glasses. The first thing he did see was the light source. He knew what it was: wand light, most likely a Lumos or light spell. That meant whoever this was, she was a witch and she was not supposed to be here. Instinctively, he reached for the top of his head

board where he kept his wand while sleeping. It wasn't there. He then reached for his glasses and put them on and looked at the strange woman for the first time. He recognized her.

"Tonks?"

"Wotcher, Harry! Looking for this?" Tonks asked handing Harry his wand. He looked a little surprised and put it out. "I am an Auror, you know. I wasn't about to wake an armed wizard who was not expecting me. You'd've hexed me for sure."

"Suppose."

"Top of the headboard, Harry?" she said shaking her head. "Too easy. Under the pillow is best. They'll likely wake you before disarming you. Remember what Moody says."

"Can't forget," Harry nodded. "Constant vigilance. Um - what are you doing here?"

"Getting you out of here," Tonks replied.

"What? But Dumbledore said I had to stay here for at least a month!"

"Do you believe everything Dumbledore tells you?" Tonks asked remembering the note pad that was now in her hand bag.

"Used to," Harry mumbled. "Now, I don't know."

"Well don't! This place isn't safe! You're in danger here!"

"What kind of danger?"

"Mortal danger!"

"But there are wards on this place," Harry complained.

"What wards?"

"Well, Dumbledore said..."



“Harry, I’m a fully qualified Auror. I can detect warding quite easily and aside from the fact that this place is unplottable, there isn’t a single defensive ward on this house!”

“But Dumbledore said something about blood wards! He said he cast one because of my Mum and her sacrifice!”

“Can’t say if he did or not,” Tonks replied. “Blood wards?”

Harry nodded.

“Did he add that they’re illegal?”

“What?”

“They are Harry. Not quite Unforgivable, but close. And no, there are no blood wards on this house. I would have detected one. If he did cast one it never took hold.”

“No surprise there,” Harry said. “He said that if I considered this pit a home, the wards would work. I’ve never considered this a home. Prison? Sure. A living hell? Definitely! A home? Never.”

“So there you go,” Tonks said. “Now let’s quit yapping and get packing. Get up and dressed!”

“Could you,” Harry began, “could you turn around, please?”

“Why? You sleep in the nick?”

“Er, no, but...” Harry blushed unwilling to tell Tonks that he had not recovered from the dream and had a raging erection. “I just sleep in my boxers and...”

“There’s nothing I haven’t seen, Harry.”

“Tonks PLEASE,” Harry pleaded.

"Fine," she said turning around. "But if you try and do a runner on me, I'll hex that hard bit right off!"

Was it that obvious, Harry wondered. But Tonks did turn and Harry gathered up some clothes and dressed. When he was done he told Tonks she could turn around. She looked at him and again wondered what was up with him. Unless he was wearing a Hogwarts uniform or tee shirt or a Molly Weasley Jumper, she had long noted his clothes were, as now, several sizes too large.

"What's that rubbish you're wearing?" she asked.

"Clothes."

"Been diving bins for your rags? Those are way too large for you, you know."

"Cousin Dudley's hand-me-downs," Harry said with embarrassment.

"Let me guess," Tonks replied. "He's either one fat fuck or loads older than you, right?"

"Hagrid tried to turn him into a pig when I first learned I was a wizard. I guess fat fuck."

"You have any clothes that fit?"

"Aside from school uniforms, no."

"I see. Okay then. Open your trunk. If there are any Dudley clothes in there, get rid of them all. All except two or three changes worth that is. We'll deal with your wardrobe tomorrow. Then I want you to gather up anything in this room that is either magical or even hints of magical and our world and put it into your trunk."

Harry did as he was told, emptying the trunk of most of Dudley's hand-me-downs. He scoured the room for anything that hinted of magic. Notes, letters, books, quills, empty bottles of potion ingredients, presents from his friends, pictures all made their way into the trunk. He checked under his bed, in the wardrobe, the desk and

dresser and even under the loose floorboard. He also included anything else he wanted to bring even if it was not magical, which included a collection of nudie magazines he had nicked from Dudley who had, in turn, nicked from his father. He did not notice whether Tonks had seen this addition to his trunk. She had as a smile crossed her face.

After ten minutes, Harry announced he was finished. He was instructed to sit on his trunk and then Tonks sat beside him.

“Take my hand,” she said. Harry did as he was told and she interlaced their fingers. Her hand felt warm in his and he almost immediately felt two waves of warmth course through his body. Before he could think of what had happened, Tonks asked if he was ready. Harry nodded.

Harry had traveled by many forms of magical transport before. The first, arguably was when Hagrid used magic to propel a small boat from the island where Harry’s Uncle had taken him to avoid his going to Hogwarts. The second, arguably was the Hogwarts express, but it looked like, sounded like and felt like a normal steam locomotive with passenger carriages. Harry really did not consider those truly magical.

His first truly magical transport was when he learned to ride a broom. It was kind of like riding a bicycle, except he didn’t have to pedal and the broom actually flew in the air. Harry, it seemed, was a natural at it. His natural talent landed him on his House Quidditch team, the youngest player in over a hundred years. He loved flying. Arguably that was why he also loved flying on the back of a Hippogriff his Third Year and just over a week ago on the back of a Thestral. Hermione, on the other hand, hated flying. Well, magical flying. Harry knew she and her parents traveled a lot and she had been on airplane, something Harry had never done.

Harry considered his first real magical transport experience was the Floo Network. This occurred before his second year when he was staying with the Weasleys at the end of the summer and they went to Diagon Alley in London. One stood in an over sized fireplace, stated ones destination, threw some magic powder to the ground and disappeared in a flash of green flames. It was always a very

disorienting experience and no matter how often he did it when he came out the other end at another fireplace he invariably landed either on his bum or his stomach.

Harry had traveled by portkey on three occasions. He didn't like that method much either. A portkey was an enchanted object that at a specific time would transport one or many to a specific location. It was a very uncomfortable way to travel. When it activated, he felt as if there was a fishhook just behind his navel tugging him and the world would spin out of control. This was another method that usually left him with a sore bum.

Harry had apparated once by accident when he was little and long before he learned he was a wizard. He only knew that was what had happened when Mr. Weasley described what apparition felt like. One had the feeling of being squeezed through a straw. Apparition had advantages as one did not need a fireplace or a specially enchanted object to jump from one place to another. But Harry was told it was perhaps the most dangerous way to travel magically. Supposedly they would learn how to do it next year sometime. If they did well enough they would get a license from the Ministry that would allow them to apparate at will. Without a license apparition was illegal.

Whatever had just happened, it was not any form of magical transport Harry had ever experienced or even heard of. In the blink of an eye, his small room in Privet Drive disappeared and this massive room filled with chandeliers, exotic plants and chairs and couches appeared around him. The room was larger than his Aunt and Uncle's entire house Harry was convinced. What also struck him was that he had not felt a thing.

"What just happened?" Harry asked. "Where are we?"

Tonks decided to ignore the first question. "Harry, this is Potter Manor."

"What? P-Potter Manor?"

"You're ancestral home, Harry."

“What?”

“The Potters have lived on these lands for well over a thousand years, Harry. This manor is a little over three hundred years old. Your father as his fathers before him grew up here. Had things been different, had they been right, you would have grown up here as well.”

“Why didn’t I? Am I safe here?”

“There are as of now only three people in the outside world who know of this place, Harry. You are one. Remus is another and I am the third. Sirius knew of this place too, but...”

“It’s safe?”

“Safer than any place on earth, Harry.”

“Is this Godrics Hollow?”

“Goodness no! That’s hundreds of miles from here.”

“Then why were my parents there and not here?”

“In the morning, Harry, I promise. It’s after three and we both need our sleep. Follow me.”

Harry followed her as she led him through the manor and to a flight of the largest stairs he had ever seen. The place screamed wealth. The Potters, his ancestors had been quite wealthy for a long time.

“The ground floor are the public rooms,” Tonks explained. “The room where we arrived is called the Conservatory, a nice place for tea I’m told. You have what is probably one of the largest libraries in magical Britain. There are several parlors and such, a room for formal receptions, a music room, several game rooms, a bar that is said to look like an English Pub, a large Concert Room, Drawing Room, a Ballroom, an informal dinning hall that is said to seat up to five hundred and a formal banquet hall that seats close to two hundred at the same table. There’s an enclosed walkway that leads from the main Manor to the gym, indoor pool and the outdoor pool.

“The main stair we are on leads to the First, Second and Third Floors. First Floor are the Private Apartments of the Lord of the Manor. That’s where you’ll be staying. There’s the Lord’s suite, which includes your Study, a Sitting Room, huge closets, a bathroom that I’m told is huge, and your Bedchambers. From your Bedchambers, a door leads to the Mistress Suite. There’s another Sitting Room, a Nursery, the Mistress Bedchamber, her dressing room, closets and bath. I’m told that the last Lord who lived here slept with his wife, as opposed to custom where they maintained separate rooms. There’s several bedrooms for children. There’s also a children’s library, classroom and large play rooms, a conference room, another music room and a couple of parlors as well. There’s also a large Common Room for the family and the family dining room.

“Second and Third Floors have the Guest Rooms, forty suites in all. There’s also a Common Room for the Guests and a large dinning room. Fourth floor is accessed by three smaller stair cases. Those are the servants’ quarters.

“Your estate is measured from the center of the conservatory, Milord. The front of the Manor faces east and the front gate is four miles from the center of the conservatory...”

“Four miles!”

“Yes, Milord. Your north and south property lines are each five miles from the center of the conservatory. Your west property line is on the coast, sixteen miles from here, although it is twenty-four from here to your south boundary and nine miles from here to your north due to the coast line.”

“Bloody hell! And this is safe?”

“Indeed. The wards that protect this place are even better than those at Hogwarts. Ancient, they are. Goblin, Elvin and Wizard, they are. Aside from the fishermen in Pottersport, a fishing village you own and that is populated by your kin and some other villages inland, only three others now alive know about this place and can see it or even come here: Remus, you and me. Remus because like Sirius, he had

the Master's permission of access. You, because you are now the Master of this estate and me, well we'll get to that later."

"The whole estate is warded?"

"Yes Harry. As far as the rest of the Wizarding world is concerned, neither this estate nor anyone who lives here exist. Death Eaters cannot find you nor can your other enemies, nor the Ministry."

"Other enemies?"

"Tomorrow Harry."

"Why now? Why after all of this time? If this place is so safe, what were my parents doing in Godrics Hollow? Why was I sent to live all this time with the Dursleys? Why didn't we live here?"

"I will answer all of those questions, Milord, but tomorrow. It is after three in the morning. I'm knackered and you need your sleep too."

"But..."

"Harry, sleep now. The time for answers has come. The time for truth has come. But you need your sleep."

Harry noticed that they were standing in a huge bedroom. There was a large, four post bed, larger than any he had seen. Windows covered one wall and the wall next to it as well, except where a large fireplace stood and a fire burned.

"The door to your dressing chamber and bath is there," Tonks said, pointing to an ornate wooden door on the same wall as the bed. "Now to sleep. I'll be in the Mistress's Bedchamber should you need anything."

Harry nodded, too tired to argue. He went through the door, passed through the dressing chamber to use the bath. The bathroom was huge, but he was too tired to take it all in. After using the facilities, he left his clothes, all but his boxers, in the dressing room and returned

to the Master's Bedchamber and crawled into the huge bed. He was asleep as soon as his head sank into the pillows.

Harry awoke surprisingly early given the late night flight from Privet Drive. By eight-thirty, he had showered and dressed and found his way to the private dining room of the Private Apartment on the First Floor. As he entered, he saw a solitary House elf, or so he thought at first. But the creature looked very different. It was at least six inches taller than any house elf he had ever seen before. House elves had grayish green skin, bat like ears, over sized noses and large eyes that made them look almost comical. They were also quite bald and typically wore loin cloths or togas fashioned from pillow cases and the like.

This creature had skin that looked human. Its ears were pointed, belying the fact that it was not human, while its blue eyes were larger than they would be were it human, they were not overly large and the small nose clearly fit its face. It had long, golden hair braided down the back, a slight yet clearly female figure and it wore a proper dress.

"My Lord Potter," the creature said in a very feminine sounding voice, wholly unlike the unnatural squeak common for the House Elves Harry remembered, "it is indeed a pleasure to finally serve you in your House."

"Who ... what are you?" Harry asked.

"I am Elda, Elf Maiden and Personal Chef to My Lord Potter and his family. We expected you years ago and feared the worse, My Lord Potter."

"Elf Maiden? Not a House Elf?"

"I am indeed of the same race as those known to you as House Elves. I and my kin who serve the Ancient and Noble House of Potter have long been free of the Dark Magic that enslaved our kind."

"I'm sorry. I don't understand."



“For thousands of years, my race willingly served witches and wizards as members of their families. We all appeared thusly and were bound to our families by a familial bond. We served as our ancestors had, out of love and pride for our families and clans. We were not slaves.

“Around a thousand years ago, a dark witch, whose name we still do not speak, discovered a spell that enslaved my race. We became bound to your kind not out of love, but malice and we became the race you know as House Elves. It is an unnatural state for us and in such state we submitted to the pain, punishments and humiliation akin to all bound against their will.

“We were denied the love we once enjoyed from our families. We were denied our former rights: the right to marry, to mate, to bear children as we desired. We were forced to endure the humiliation of servitude as opposed to the joys of service and family. We were bred like common animals and our children denied the right to choose to serve their family or seek another when they came of age.

“Four hundred years ago, Lord Potter, an ancestor of yours, discovered what had happened to my kind. He dedicated his life to finding a way to restore at least his elves to their former glory. He succeeded, thus here I stand: an Elf Maiden, a Potter, a mother and wife, and your loyal servant and, I hope, friend.”

“Are you the only Elf in service?” Harry asked.

“Oh no, Milord. There are many serving the Potter Estate. I don’t know how many for certain. For that, you’d need to talk to Darda. He’s the Head Elf for the Estate and keeps track of such things.”

“Milord Potter,” another voice said, “I am Darda.” Harry saw an older looking elf in very elegant robes.

“I’ll have breakfast for you and the young lady directly,” Elda said and disappeared with barely a sound.

“You’re the head of staff?” Harry asked the new elf.

“Yes Milord.”

“Just how big is this estate?”

“The Manor estate is about a quarter million acres, all told.” Harry’s jaw dropped. “Excluding this Manor House, there are twenty guest houses: eight on the coast overlooking the sea and twelve scattered about the remainder of the estate. There’s Pottersport, which is the main town located on the coast and is entirely within the Estate and its wards. Several thousand witches, wizards, Muggles and squibs live there and earn a living from the sea. It may be much more than that has there has not been a proper census in ages. There’s your own beach house as well. There are over three thousand acres of gardens and much of the rest of the estate is either farmed or pasture land or woodlands.”

“How many elves?”

“Forty-six work in the Manor House, Milord. The gardening and grounds keeping staff numbers two hundred and thirty-one. Five hundred and forty work the farms. There are ten who serve as game wardens and another sixteen at the Manor stables. Forty work in the guest houses and another sixteen in your beach chalet. Including me, that’s an even nine hundred, Milord.”

“Bloody hell! I have to manage this?”

“You may if you desire. It’s not necessary. The place pretty much has run itself, quite successfully I might add since the last Lord Potter and his Lady passed away eight years ago during the Dragon Pox outbreak.”

“Eight years ago! But my parents died fourteen years ago!”

“Yes Milord. And your grandfather spent the remaining six years of his life trying to find out what became of you. The Ministry was most unkind to his requests and refused him to probate your father’s Will. Charles Potter was most put out, I’d dare say. According to the Will, you should have been raised here.”

"What?" Harry cried out.

"I'm afraid it's true, Harry," a woman's voice said. Harry turned and saw Tonks enter the dining room dressed in the same clothes she wore the night before.

"Was anyone going to tell me any of this?" Harry protested.

Tonks nodded. "Sirius was. He was planning to do it right after you got back from school for this," her voice hitched, "s-summer. Obviously..."

Obviously he bloody well can't now, Harry thought, seeing as he was dead.

"The task passed to Remus and I, Harry. It's one of the reasons why you're here and not with those so called Muggle relations. But more on that later. Aren't you hungry?"

Harry admitted he was. Darda excused himself as the large breakfast arrived.

"Harry," Tonks said as Harry was eating, "Sirius left instructions for me and Remus in the event he died before this summer. We are to tell you everything we know. You've been lied to practically all your life. That ends now! Well, maybe not just this minute, but when I get back from the errands I need to run later today..."

"Errands?"

"Promised you a proper wardrobe, didn't I? That and I'll be staying here for the next month or two so I need clothes as well, unless Dumbledore has Order business for me. Not likely though."

"Why? Why not?"

"I'm on forty-five days leave from the Auror Corps. Some of it is 'bereavement leave' as Sirius and I were - um - close. That and I have vacation time saved up. So, I'll be here to keep you company, to

tell you all we know - more of which you won't like - and to start training you proper."

"Really?" Harry asked as he picked up some toast to butter. "'Bout bloody time!"

"Hopefully, it's not too late," Tonks added. "As to the Order, well Remus and I are assigned to keep an eye on you at least until your Birthday when you're supposed to go to the Burrow and spend the remainder of the Hols with the Weasleys."

"But my birthday is in less than forty-five days," Harry observed. "Are you going to the Weasleys as well?"

"No. And neither are you."

"Why not?"

"There are reasons and I will tell you them. I promise, Harry. For now, rest assured the training Remus and I are going to have you doing cannot be done there, okay?"

Harry nodded. "No more lies, right?"

Tonks nodded. "Now," she said, "as I will be honest with you, can you be honest with me?"

"I suppose," Harry said with caution.

"Do you have feelings for Hermione?"

Harry blushed. He really didn't want to talk about this. They had only just started going out within the last week and while it was wonderful, it clearly had strained their relations with Ron and Ginny Weasley. He nodded. "I - I'm in love with her," he said softly.

"Really?"

Harry nodded. "Since second year. Didn't realize it until the Yule Ball, although I should have."

"Is this the fifteen year old she's cute and shaggable kind of love or the I want to be with her forever, birth my children and cannot live without her in my life kind of love."

"The forever kind."

"Babies too?"

"Well, not just yet but..." Harry blushed.

"You dating?"

"Bout a week."

"What took you so long?"

"I - I was afraid she didn't love me. Er - well - I was afraid she didn't love me the same way I love her."

"Does she?"

Harry nodded. "I - I thought she was killed. When it turned out she was alive, I swore I would tell her, even if she didn't share those feelings. When she woke up, I did. I - well - I kind of asked her to marry me."

"You did?"

Harry nodded. "And she kind of said yes. Ron was all worked up about it. Accused me of stealing his girl and she told him off, said she loved me and wanted to be with me and..."

"Interesting," Tonks said. "That certainly changes things."

"Yeah," Harry agreed although he and Tonks were not thinking about the same things.

"Oh," Tonks said handing Harry a notebook. "Sorry, but I nicked this from your desk last night."

"You read it?" Harry asked recognizing that it was the notebook where he recorded his thoughts.

Tonks nodded. "No worries, Harry. Every question you have will be answered."

Harry nodded.

"You have a right to be suspicious, Harry. Your insights are not far off the mark and believe me, Sirius, Remus and I have been asking many of the same questions. Sirius practically from the day he was sent to Azkaban without a trial. Remus and I began to believe all was not well early your third year. Course, we couldn't bounce our ideas of Sirius until after you and Hermione rescued him months later. For over eighteen months we tried to fit the puzzle together. It was shortly after Christmas break this past year that we finally saw the forest through the trees and believe me, it's one ugly forest. Our plan was to get you here as soon as possible after the summer began, tell you everything and see where things led from there."

Harry nodded not sure of what to say.

Tonks left for her errands almost immediately after she had finished her breakfast telling Harry she would be back around dinner time. She suggested that Harry might want to spend the day exploring the Manor and maybe the grounds as well. It seemed like a good idea to Harry. He planned to use the morning to explore the Manor itself as it seemed huge. After lunch, he thought about breaking out his racing broom and flying over the property itself.

After touring the private apartments, which he thought were far too opulent for his liking but seeing as there were centuries of Potter acquisitions decided to leave things as they were, Harry made his way down to the ground floor. It seemed so much brighter with the sun shining outside. Remembering what he was told not hours before, he headed off in the direction of the library. The part of him that loved Hermione felt it was appropriate to check out the one room she could truly appreciate. When he walked in, he was stunned. He had never seen so many books in one place, not even at Hogwarts. The library

was huge, with two levels of books and a large open area with tables, chairs and massive leather couches for reading.

Harry found himself standing before a large book that was open. He could not read a word of it. "Excuse me?" he asked.

He heard a soft "pop" and saw he was now joined by an elf he had not met. This elf was bald and wearing what looked like reading glasses. "Milord Potter," the elf said, "'tis a pleasure to finally have you home! Welcome. I am William, the Librarian."

"William?" Harry asked. For an elf this was a very normal name.

"My parents sensed I would love books on all manner of things and named me after the Bard."

"Who?"

"Shakespeare," William replied. "We have first folios of all his plays here."

Harry had no idea what William was talking about. "What's this?" he asked pointing to the large book.

"Gutenberg Bible," William said. "Printed in the fifteenth century. Perfect condition! First book published using moveable type! We also have an illuminated bible scribed by monks dating back to the ninth century. Wonderful work of art it is!"

Harry nodded trying to hide the fact he had no idea what the elf was talking about. "Er - how many books?"

"Magical or non-magical, Milord?"

"Er - both."

"Our non-magical collection contains works on science, history, literature and such, many first editions. We have 163,789 volumes. Magical, we have every subject and more: 178,291 volumes. Over

ten thousand volumes may be the only copies of their kind in all magical Britain!”

“Including Hogwarts?”

William nodded. “Dumbledore’s been dying to get his hands on our collection. We think that’s why he’s kept you from us.”

“What? For books?”

“Maybe more. But this collection is worth far more than its weight in gold, Milord.”

Harry nodded. “Thanks.”

“Anything you might wish to read, Sir?”

“Erm, I’m just finding my way around for now. Just got here last night.”

“I understand, Milord. When you are ready...” and the elf disappeared.

Hermione will think she’s died and gone to heaven if she ever sees this place, Harry thought. He spent several minutes walking through the library and thinking about the book loving young woman he loved. If she ever saw this, I’d probably have to find a way to force her to leave, he thought to himself. There’s no way she could read all these books, is there?

After a time, Harry left the library and continued on his tour. He soon found himself joined by a female elf named Marta who claimed to be the Potter House Historian. He half paid attention as she described the history of the place, the objects and the architecture of the various rooms he entered. At last, he found himself in the Grand Banquet Hall. It reminded him of the Great Hall at Hogwarts, but there was only one huge table in it and scores of ornately carved chairs as opposed to the plain benches. The walls were covered with tapestries and paintings. Marta told him the paintings were of the last twenty-five generations of Lord Potters and their wives or principal concubines. Harry had no idea what the latter term meant. The portraits were in



pairs with the names, dates of birth and death of each in brass plaques on the bottom of the frame. Harry moved from portrait to portrait seeing as fashions changed through the ages and wondering about it all. For fifteen years, he had no history. Now he was engulfed in it. He finally arrived at two portraits that seemed fairly recent. Like most, they were an older couple, but the clothes seemed recent enough. He stared at the two people, and soon realized one had died when he was a baby.

Lord Charlus Edmund Potter Dorea Constance (Black) Potter

3 May 1893 - 14 December 1978 16 August 1895 - 23 March 1981

Married: 1 July 1913

Ellen Suzanne (Potter) Brown 5 May 1914

Cynthia Leanne (Potter) Longbottom 14 August 1915

Charles David Potter 17 November 1916

"Who's this?" Harry asked.

"Your Great-grandparents, Milord," Marta answered.

"Dorea Black? Is she any relation to my - my godfather Sirius Black?"

"Indeed she is, Milord. Dorea was Sirius Black's Cousin, the daughter of his Great Grand-Uncle Cygnus Black. Your father and the late Lord Black were second cousins on Sirius's mother's side and third cousins on his father's side. You are Lord Black's second cousin once removed or third cousin once removed, depending upon which line you follow."

"Once removed?"

"Your father and Lord Black were second cousins. As the son of a second cousin, you are once removed from them."

"Oh." Harry still didn't understand. "How ... How'd they die, my Great - Grandparents that is?"

"Death Eaters claimed both of them, Milord. They were each killed in Diagon Alley."

"Bloody hell!"

"'Tis what more than a few families call the place, Milord. Dangerous it is to go there when your enemies are about. Still, go you must on occasion."

Harry could only nod. "And the others?"

"Your Grandaunts Ellen and Cynthia and Grandfather Charles."

"Longbottom?"

"Yes, Milord. Cynthia married Howard Longbottom. Howard's first cousin Alan Longbottom would be the next Head of that Ancient and Noble House. I believe that title now vests in Alan's grandson. A boy named Neville if memory serves. You might know him, perhaps?"

Harry nodded. "He's a friend of mine from school."

"Appropriate. The Potters and Longbottoms have been allied and close for generations beyond count, Milord. I guess it is meant to be. Longbottoms and Potters have been bonding quite often. You are related to them and they to you and your families have been related for generations."

"Are any of them still alive?"

"Alas no. Your grandaunt Ellen died in the Blitz in 1941. Your grandaunt Cynthia was claimed in the Great Dragon Pox Outbreak of 1988."

Harry looked at the next to last portrait.

Lord Charles David Potter Samantha Elaine (Meeks) Potter

17 November 1916 - 23 August 1988 1 June 1918 - 15 September 1988

Bonded: 5 August 1934

James Charles Potter 27 March 1960

"My Grandparents?" Harry asked.

Marta nodded.

"They were alive when - when all this stuff happened to me and my parents."

Marta nodded. "They looked for you, Milord, 'til they each became too sick. Dragon Pox claimed them before they could find you."

Harry's eyes began to sting and he felt a huge lump in his throat. His grandparents tried! He - he could have had such a different life! He didn't need the wealth this Manor displayed, but he was like a man in a desert when it came to family. His Aunt and Uncle hated him. Why had he been sent there and not here? Why?

The next portraits were of his parents.

James Charles Potter Lily Marie (Evans) Potter

27 March 1960 - 31 October 1981 30 January 1960 - 31 October 1981

Bonded: 30 June 1975

"Why were they not here?" he asked. "Why Godric's Hollow? Do I own any property there?"

"No Milord," Marta responded. "House Potter has many properties both in Britain and abroad. None in that dump of a town!"

"I see, so why were they there?"

"I recall Lord Potter saying that one Dumbledore convinced them it was safer. To this day, I don't see how! This Manor and estate is safer than anywhere in Britain. No enemy can penetrate the wards - ever. Even a traitor to the house cannot! Yet off the young heir went. He trusted the man who sent him there and ignored the protests of his father. And here we are as a result, Milord."

"Whose property?"

"Milord?"

"Who owned the property where my parents were killed?"

"The last Lord Potter cursed his name until the day he died, Milord. Charles Potter's last words were a curse to the man who he believed killed his only child and stole his grandson from him."

"Who?"

"Albus Dumbledore."

"Dumbledore?"

"Said Chief of your Wizengamot, yes Milord. Lord Potter wanted them buried here in the family plot, but Dumbledore said they should lie where others can see."

"That bastard!"

"The last Lord Potter's words were less charitable, Milord."

"Really?" Harry asked in a sarcastic tone. Dumbledore had now become seriously suspect in Harry's mind. Harry would need a really good reason with irrefutable evidence to ever trust the old bastard again. He wanted nothing more than to be rid of all of this nonsense!

"Why am I not up there?"

"You were not born here, Milord, and until today you have not made this Estate your home. It will be corrected."

"Thank you, Marta," he said as calmly as he could. It wasn't her fault Dumbledore was an ass. "I enjoyed the tour. Now I think I shall seek something to eat for lunch."

"It was my pleasure, Milord," Marta replied.

Harry did his best not to storm out of the Banquet Hall. He did his best to maintain his composure when all he really wanted to do was punch the hell out of something - anything! Through the Ballroom, the larger banquet room, the bar he stormed hoping to keep his rising temper in check. He then entered the main entry. There was the Conservatory with its exotic plants and such. It seemed peaceful so Harry seemed drawn to it. As he rounded the jungle like space and found entry, he could see the Conservatory was not empty.

There was a young woman standing near the center. She seemed surrounded by suitcases and trunks. She was wearing a skirt and blouse, he could see. He could not see her face. Her shoulders seemed to be shaking as she seemed to stare at the floor. She seemed to be quietly sobbing. Harry could not see her face at all, but the long brown curls of her hair - he would recognize them anywhere.

"Hermione?"

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)Hermione Jane Granger, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96.

### CHAPTER THREE: HOW DO I EXPLAIN?

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1996, King's Cross Station, Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ , London

Hermione Granger was in heaven, if that was possible. She was being held in the arms of the one young man who existed for her, the one she had hoped would love her and the one who had only days before asked her to marry him. True, it was not the most romantic of proposals. Then again, had not one Ron Weasley gotten involved, she would have considered it perfect. She had been in love with the young man holding her for years and never for once believed he felt the same way about her. He did! She was in heaven!

Hermione had fallen for Harry back during her First Year and really fallen not long after. Harry was her first and it seemed one of her two only true friends. They had had only one major spat. Third Year she had told their Head of House about Harry's Firebolt. She suspected the top of the line racing broom was a trap, that it was cursed. Harry was less than pleased about that, but forgave her fairly quickly.

He had broken her heart on occasion. Then again, until very recently he did not know she saw it that way. He had not asked her to the Yule Ball the year before and that had hurt her. She eventually accepted a date from an international Quidditch star, Victor Krum. He was handsome and all the girls wanted him - except her. She considered Victor no more than a friend which was why he had asked her.

"I can 'ave any girl," he told her honestly. "They want the star, not me. You - you do not see that in me. We go as friends?"

"Why?"

"Anyone else ask you?"

"No," Hermione seemed ready to cry.

“Then they are all idiots! I go with you. They look like fools and I go with friend, not some fan girl after my fame, money and pictures in paper!”

“Okay,” she had said. The one boy she wanted to go to the ball with had not asked her or anyone by then. True, she thought even then, girls might be a problem for him. But I’m his friend!

The look on Harry’s face when she finally arrived at the ball melted Hermione’s heart. He saw her, recognized her and seemed to melt at the sight of her. It hurt her and thrilled her at the same time. It hurt her that he had finally asked someone else to go with him and it was not her. She knew he would ask someone. As a Tri-Wizard Champion he was required to have a date. He knew she had a date and was too nice a boy to try and ask her to break it or not believe her when she told him - unlike Ron who tried both. The look on his face spoke volumes. Later that night, before Ron ruined everything, Harry told her she looked spectacular! She was in heaven, if only for a moment.

The problem was for Hermione, she had been head over heels in love with Harry perhaps since First Year. She remembered the moment they first had met. It was during the train ride to Hogwarts. She was a Muggle Born. She knew she was smart, but she had never had a friend before and she most certainly felt insecure about what was to come. She had only recently learned she was an honest to God witch capable of magic. While that thrilled her, she was terrified she was behind many of her classmates by virtue of the fact that they knew about magic and she did not.

She shared a compartment with two others. There was Sally-Anne Perks, another Muggle Born like Hermione. Sally-Anne seemed nice enough, but also seemed put off by Hermione. So were most, she thought. Neville Longbottom had grown up around magic and she and Neville were drawn into a long conversation. It seemed no one ever cared for what Neville thought about things before. Hermione did because she was curious. Neville was a nice boy. He wasn’t put off with her at all.

Neville suddenly realized he lost his pet toad Trevor. Hermione could care less about toads, but it was Neville’s pet so she agreed to help

Neville find it. That was how she first met the boy and now young man of her dreams. She stumbled into a compartment on the train. There was a red haired jerk going on about something called Quiditch and a boy with black messy hair and glasses who stared at the red head as if he were talking Greek. The red head seemed seriously put out that a girl would interrupt his monolog. The other boy actually seemed relieved and smiled at her.

She had seen the other boy before. When Professor McGonagall had come to her parents house to tell her she was a witch and had been accepted to the most prestigious school in all Europe (so she was told) of Hogwarts, she had convinced her Daddy to help her find anything on the subject of real magic. One trip to Diagon Alley later, and she had loads of books and, by chance, that year's Harry Potter issue of Witch Weekly. It seemed every year that witch's magazine had an issue on the most eligible wizard in their word, now an eleven year old boy said to be set to go to Hogwarts. There was a picture of him on the cover and Hermione recognized the face on the boy who was not acting like she was gum stuck to his shoe.

She knew she had blown it the moment his face sank when she said she knew who he was. He seemed like such a nice boy. Why did I tell him that? Why? I don't care that he's famous or might be rich! He's a nice boy and I've never truly had a friend and what happens when I try?

The oddest thing then happened. She and Harry were sorted into the same house at school and while they were not best of friends, Harry was the only one who seemed to not ignore her or go out of his way to be mean to her. She had scolded him on more than a few occasions for either trying to break the rules or breaking them. He was not the only one, but he was the only one who did not seem to mind her and her bossy attitude. Ron Weasley, on the other hand...

Ron was an ass from day one! She was used to the type, but this bastard never let her off! His only saving graces were two: first, he was Harry's friend; second, it was because of his stupidity she became Harry's friend. Harry had always been nice to her, but being Ron's friend kept that quiet their first couple of months at school. Then, on Halloween, Ron said some extremely cruel things about her



and she heard them. He said them to Harry and she thought Harry was on Ron's side, although she had no real reason to believe it aside from the fact she had never had a friend. She found herself crying her eyes out in a girl's bathroom for hours wanting to go home. A troll changed everything.

She was sure she was dead as the huge and menacing beast loomed over her when Harry burst into the bathroom calling for her. Ron was with him, but even as terrified as she was, she saw it was all Harry. Ron was only there because Harry had dragged him into it. Harry had come to save HER! Didn't matter. She was dead and she knew it. Harry was not match for an ten foot tall Mountain Troll. Still, her knight in tattered school robes had arrived to try! To her amazement, he and git boy Ron succeeded! While it would not be until a couple of years later that she knew she was in love with Harry, she knew then that Harry was far more impressive than the legendary Harry Potter - Boy Who Lived. The real Harry was - wow! Harry was her true friend and had shown it. Ron had just been along for the ride and Hermione knew that as well and over the subsequent years Ron proved that again and again!

When Harry had not asked her to the Yule Ball a few years later, Hermione began to doubt. She felt ugly and undesirable. He never truly gave her that impression. Just the opposite, really. When Ron asked her to the Ball in a condescending way, Harry stood up for her when she shot the git down. He said that so long as she was happy, he didn't care that she had a date. At the time this annoyed her to no end. Now she knew. Harry was only concerned with her happiness. He truly loved her even then.

Took him a while to realize it, she thought. Then again, compared to other girls I have not been advertising my feelings towards him. Then, then again, my feelings are for Harry and not some famous Witch Weekly pin up most eligible bachelor type! As she stood on the platform in his arms with her lips to his in a passionate kiss and remembered when he had told her that he felt the same way about her that she had about him for so long, she could care less about magic! I have the perfect one. He's my best friend and loves me as a woman too! And I so love him, she thought kissing back and not caring who saw.

A cough interrupted her bliss. She broke the kiss and saw her parents standing there.

"Mum! Dad!" she said.

"Missy," her Dad growled.

"Erm - this is Harry," she said.

"Really." Her dad seemed less than pleased.

"Harry?" her Mum said.

Harry nodded.

"Hermione's told us so much about you," she began. "Left out the bit about you being her boyfriend, it seems," she added less than pleased.

"Erm," Harry began, "recent development. Very recent development."

"Mind explaining that one?" Dad Granger asked.

"Um - well - there was this - erm - battle. My - shit - my Godfather got killed in it fighting beside me and ... well that was after ..."

"After what?"

"Hermione was there too. She fought. She was amazing! We all did. Outnumbered two to one we were against the best the enemy has. Hermione was the oldest there and - well we fought the best the enemy had to offer to a stalemate but..."

"But what?"

"She was hit, sir," Harry began to cry. "I don't know by what, but she was! I thought she was dead! I didn't care after that! They could kill me and the entire world! I didn't care. There is no life for me without her in it."

"Then a friend of ours who was not resigned to death - I wanted to join her - he told me she was still alive and - well - battle on again! My godfather died. But my reason for living did not. I - I love your daughter, Sir. I'm sorry."

"For what?"

"I attract life and death stuff. I would rather Hermione had nothing to do with me because of that. She's with me, it's life and death stuff. But..."

"But?"

"Damn it! I love her! I want her to be safe but I can't live without her, Sir! I - I could not - cannot face this shit on my own and she - she stands by me and completes me and..."

"And just what are your intentions with regards to Hermione?"

"I - I ... Should we live, I'm going to marry her, Sir. Not tomorrow or something, but one day. There is no one else. I'll marry her or be a monk!"

"So you two are engaged?"

"Erm - ask her? I asked her already and she - she said later or something."

"Later, but not no?"

Harry nodded.

"You've seen her naked? You've shagged her?"

"No! And no again! She's not some shag, Sir! Were we to do that, should we do that, it won't be a shag! It'll be the real deal, Sir!"

"Thank you, Harry," Hermione said folding into his arms.

"Can't live without you, Love," Harry replied as he kissed her on the forehead. "You have a beautiful daughter, Sir," Harry said. "And her beauty is total! She has it in mind, heart, body, soul and - for us - magic. Total package and I feel lucky just to call her my friend!"

"So you haven't been shagging my daughter?" Mr. Granger asked.

"She damn near died," Harry all but cried. "I've been in love with her for so long and - and I never told her that and then I thought she was dead. I gave up right then. They could kill me and I'd welcome it if it meant I could be with Hermione again! But she wasn't dead and then I got pissed! They hurt her! No one hurts her! NO ONE! There are two dead Death Eaters out there. I offed them for helping hurt her! Another I damn near killed! NO ONE HURTS HER!"

"We had not even been dating. I loved her and never told her and didn't 'cause I was afraid she didn't love me the same way. She was in hospital following the battle and I - I couldn't leave her. I had to tell her even if she didn't feel the same way. But she did, didn't you?" Harry asked turning to Hermione who had not left his side.

"Daddy," she said, "better get used to the idea. He's going to father your grand-babies one day. Not soon, but one day!"

"Harry," Mr. Granger growled.

"Should I live through this hell, she's right. I will marry her and she will bear our children - in that order and not until after it's over."

"Still, you're a death sentence! Or so it seems..."

"Did you ever serve in the Army, Sir?" Harry asked.

Captain Robert Granger, formerly of the S.A.S. kept silent. His service was still considered a State secret.

"Have you ever served in combat?" Harry continued. "Have you ever served in line of battle where victory or defeat mean nothing anymore, Queen and Country nothing and living and dying for you and your

friends everything? Have you ever killed another person? Have you ever had to watch helpless while your friends died in battle?"

Robert granger could answer all of those questions with a "Yes."

"Most soldiers these days serve by choice. I never had that choice. At age eleven, I was thrown into a war against my will. I killed at age eleven. Again at age twelve. I have served in magical battle every year since. I have lost friends and family in this war and seen them die. The lives I have taken, I don't dream of them at all. It's the friends who I could not keep alive who haunt me.

"Through every battle, one has stood at my side. I never asked her to nor expected her to nor ordered her to nor was she compelled by oath to stand and fight. Yet she has always been there. I love your daughter for so many reasons, Sir. She is smart, beautiful - God is she that - you should have seen her at the Yule Ball - she's funny. She is the most kind, caring and selfless person I know. And she has stood with me in every battle I have fought or at least tried to. If there is one thing I could fault her for it's that she is also the bravest person I know. I'd rather her be the coward for then I could keep her safe! Twice I've held vigil by her bedside in hospital for her loyalty. I never asked her to come or to fight. She even tried to stop me on at least one occasion. But she fought like a lion! Twice, her friendship to me nearly took her away. Twice I was crushed.

"I swear, Sir. I cannot keep her out of battle should I have to engage the enemy. But I swear! Woe to those who ever seek to hurt her - EVER! Should I be alive, with my dying breath, I will hunt them down and kill them, their wives, children and ensure their line ceases to exist!

"Admittedly, I as I am sure you would prefer she stay out of the line of battle. But try as I might in that regard - well - your daughter is stubborn as hell, won't be treated as some helpless girl and, to be honest, is hell on wheels in combat!

"I don't want any of this shit! I want a normal life! But I am stuck with this goddamn war! She wants to help and try as I might I can't stop her. Truth is, I'd be dead time and again without her.

"I would rather we have a couple of years of teenage stuff, then marry and raise a family. But we are at war and I seem to be at the center of the maelstrom and I cannot stop her from standing beside me in the line. Honestly, I don't know if I want to! She's that good a warrior! But, I cannot lose her. I just cannot!"

How could he respond to this, Bob Granger thought. He wanted his daughter safe, but he too had been the warrior. Safe is for REMFs: Rear Echelon Mother Fuckers. In war, those were the ones who wanted the uniform but not the risk associated with wearing it so they passed out boots and such for the war effort. They were loathed by the true warriors, tolerated as a necessary evil and nothing more.

"You love my daughter?" Bob Granger asked.

"Yes," Harry replied. "With all my heart."

"Yet she stands and fights with you."

"I don't like that bit. But I cannot tell her 'no.' She's too - well, you know."

Bob nodded. To say Hermione was headstrong and committed was an understatement. This Harry seemed to know that and the pain he seemed to express about Hermione's willingness to fight seemed genuine.

"You spending the summer with us?"

"I want to, Sir. I'm told I can't."

"Should it happen, will you promise to try and keep her safe?"

"She'll be safe, Sir. Or I'll die trying to make it so!"

Bob Granger knew then that Harry was the only boy he really would not mind sniffing around his daughter. Of course, he'd still prefer none at all. She was still his little girl in his mind. He could see

Hermione had moved away. She was beet red from the encounter. He leaned to Harry and said:

"You don't marry her, and she still wants you, I'll kill you myself!"

"Sir?"

"You have permission to marry my daughter, but not anytime too soon. Don't blow it, lad."

"Yes Sir!"

Hermione sat in the back seat of the family car as they drove away from King's Cross. She was in tears. She was humiliated at the way her father had treated Harry and was certain her father had ruined everything.

"Something the matter, Sweetie?" Rose Granger asked.

"H-he ruined everything," Hermione cried.

"Who?"

"D-Daddy! I finally - well not finally - I fall in love and he falls for me and, well I admit we fell a while ago but couldn't admit it to ourselves or each other until very recently and he asks me and I say yes but later and - and then Daddy scares him off!"

"Did no such thing!" Robert Granger protested. "Fact is, I told him if he didn't marry you - assuming that was against your choice - I'd cut his throat myself."

"DADDY!"

"BUT, if you and he are still in agreement on that matter," Robert Granger said, "I gave him my blessing and I now give you it as well."

"Bob!" Rose Granger protested.

"He's an amazing young man, Rosie. He loves our Hermione more than life itself but respects her enough not to reign her in. I wish he could. I wish he would! But how can I expect him to show less respect for Hermione than I have! How can I? Tell me Rose!"

"That bad, huh?"

"If Hermione wants to marry him and he still wants to marry her, I'm not about to stand in front of that on coming train!"

"Thank you, Daddy," Hermione said from the back seat.

"He'd better make you happy, love."

"We get out of this shit war - sorry - and he will!"

"Just lay off the grandbabies for a couple of years - a year at least and I'll have no issue," Robert started. "No, just make sure there are none until about nine months after your wedding night, okay?"

"Fine by me," Hermione said.

When Hermione arrived at her home, an owl was awaiting her. It was not Harry's snowy white Hedwig, but a tawny and tiny owl she knew as "Pig." It was Ron Weasley's owl. He must have sent it off while they were still on the bloody train back to London, Hermione thought. That set off alarms in her mind. Still, she opened the letter and was pleasantly surprised it did not blow up in her face, but only until she read it.

Dearest Hermione:

You are my girl and you know it!

I just had a brilliant idea and my Mum thinks it's brilliant too! Why don't you spend the summer here at the Burrow instead of with them useless Muggles and such? You can stay with Ginny and talk about - well whatever you girls talk about and you can be magical and not



have to do that Muggle stuff. A whole summer, Hermione! Just think about how much fun we'll have!

See you soon!

Love,

Ron

Of all the presumptuous nonsense, Hermione thought as she noticed Ron's owl "Pig" was not about to leave without a reply. Hermione had no intention of spending the summer at the Burrow. With Harry? Yes! Otherwise, she would spend her time with her parents. She decided to pass this on in no uncertain terms:

To: Mr. Ronald Weasley

I regret to inform you I must decline the invitation your pathetic bird brought to my attention. My parents need not have reminded me that we can count the number of days we've spent together as a family in the last two years on one hand with fingers to spare.

I'm certain you cannot understand that stuff. Family means nothing to you at all. But it means something to me!

We - my parents and I - will spend this summer on the Continent seeing the sights. Maybe we'll be back the last week before school. But I intend to spend what time I have in Britain and away from my family with my future husband. Sorry Ronald. Got plans. Unless I can find a way to avoid the horror, I'll see you September 1st.

H. Granger

P.S. Asshole! "Them useless Muggles" and such ARE MY FAMILY! FUCK OFF AND DIE!

It was cold. It was heartless. For some reason Hermione could not fathom, it was the perfect reply. It was not true. Well, it was about how little time she had spent with her Mum and Dad. It just was not true about their plans for the summer. So far as she knew, they had

no immediate plans, but she did know they wanted to spend time with her - especially after learning about her serious boyfriend. She hoped the red haired git would get the message to piss off! She was worried he would not get the obvious hint. For some reason she could not fathom, Hermione made magical copies of the two letters for future reference before sending the original on to her former friend. She then decided to write to Harry as she would not be at all surprised if Harry's owl showed up during the night.

My Love, Harry:

Just had an interesting ride home from King's Cross where I was interrogated at length about a certain tall, dark and handsome man whom I just happen to be head over heels in love with. (Don't fret! Said mystery Love of my life has always been and will always be you.). As pleasant as the interrogation was (as it not very) it did end quite well. I think my folks like you and Daddy said he's truly happy for us (with the proviso of no babies before we are married, although I'm not certain he's totally serious about this so long as we do get married.)

I already miss you loads, Harry. I miss your eyes, your smile. I miss your lips terribly. I miss you as my pillow and blanket. I feel so empty without you. I know why. I love you and never want to be apart from you again. But I'm here and your stuck in that horrid home for the time being so all I can do is write to you and dream about you and dream about the day we are together again.

My Love, I almost died without telling you how I really feel about you. I almost died without knowing that you love me as much as I love you. I don't know if Madam Pomphrey told you, but she did tell me and Professor McGonagall just how close a call I had. They still don't know what the curse was, but they do know what it did and what it could have done. A few millimeters in any direction and the brunt of the curse would have destroyed a vital organ. As it was, it was a close run thing.

When I woke up and saw you sitting by me (you were asleep, Love. You're so adorable when you're asleep, but much more fun awake.), it was the happiest moment of my life. It would have been wonderful

and then you told me you loved me too and - well - had we not been in the hospital wing with people all around, you would have seen ALL of me real quick. I've been thinking about this for a long time, Harry. Years even. Of course, until about a week ago, that's all it was: thinking, dreaming, hoping. Hoping you would love me as much as I loved you. Dreaming of hearing those three magic words from you to me and me to you. Dreaming of my first real kiss and you being the one and only who could and would do that first time and every time. Dreaming of all the first and only times I might have in life and all of them with you. Dreaming of losing my virginity to the one and only man I feel deserves the honor. Dreaming of the ways I can please you and you me. Dreaming of a lot of things that a serious person like me should not be dreaming about.

A girl decides when. I did a long time ago. I decided that if you feel for me the way I feel for you, you will be my first and only. After I woke up following the Battle and heard those words, I decided then and there. I am going to make love to my Harry as soon as possible, preferably before this summer is out. I am going to make love to my Harry as often as possible for as long as possible, hopefully for decades and decades to come. It was a reason why I invited you to stay the summer with me: in the hopes that you loved me too and in hopes that you would make my dreams all come true.

But you're stuck there for now and I'm stuck here and in all probability, we won't see each other alone for a while. I would come to the Burrow when you're released from your summer prison. I want to. I want to be with you and be alone with you and make love to you and... But I don't know now.

I got a letter from Ron just now. It was rude, offensive and bigoted. It was his idea of an invitation and - well, he's no longer MY friend Harry. Please think of a way for us to be together this summer! Please! My birthday present to you is me, My Love. All of me! Without hesitation, and without restraint. I want you to have me, Harry. I want you! I love you! And I want to make love with you! Please find a way for my dreams to come true?

I miss you very much and long for you!

Love,

Hermione.

P.S., Hedwig is here with a letter from you. Thank you, Harry! It was wonderful. And yes, I do agree something is up with the Weasleys. I add that whatever it is, we probably won't like it. Remember what Mad-Eye says and I will too!

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1996, The Granger Residence, Loughton, Essex.

Hermione had sent Hedwig out with her letter to Harry just before she turned in for the night. She had spent some time debating whether to send it at all as she was basically promising Harry that she would make love to him at the earliest opportunity and was not entirely sure how he would respond to that. After all, she thought, Sirius just died and Harry has always been reluctant to get too close to people and she had just all but told him she wanted to be closer to him than anyone in his past. She knew Harry well enough to think he might be taken aback as to be that close to Harry begged for the kind of attention Harry did not want any of the people he cared for to suffer, both from the press and from his enemies.

On the other hand, Harry was a fifteen year old boy. He might not be as obviously obsessed about sex as his contemporaries, but she did recall seeing him looking at the more curvaceous girls at school, or at least the ones who did not hide their attributes. The part of her that feared that Harry might be put off about her overture had a counterpart in her mind. The counterpart argued it was at least equally likely he would get aroused and do what most if not all boys his age did under such circumstances when they had the chance and that part of Hermione shocked her. That part wanted to watch.

She went to sleep that night hugging a pillow, pretending it was her Harry. She hoped one day soon she would go to sleep at night cuddling with her Harry and not some soft pillow. She hoped she would dream of being with Harry or maybe coming up with an idea about how to be with him considering his condemnation to remain with his so called relatives. Her last conscious thoughts before drifting

into sleep were of her Harry and hoping one day they would indeed always be together.

Hermione awoke the next morning much later than she normally did. She was normally an early riser, even on little sleep. Since the Battle, she had been less of an early riser and even gravitated to wanting to stay in bed as long as she could get away with it. She had been told it was an after effect of the curse that nearly killed her and the treatment and it might be weeks before she began to return to her old self. Still, that part of her mind that remembered her old self was not pleased with the "lay about" new Hermione who slept until someone came to wake her.

Her first thought after her mother woke her up and said it was time for breakfast was to wonder whether Harry had received her letter. Little Whinging was only about sixty miles away and Harry's Owl could easily have arrived by now, even if it did decide to stop along the way for a nice feed on whatever Hedwig ate when on the hunt. Hermione liked Harry's owl almost as much as she liked her own familiar - Crookshanks. Crookshanks was a cat / kneazel mix. He was as adept at feeding himself as Harry's nocturnal bird of prey. Hermione did not like to think about what these two creatures ate when left to their own devices. Then again, keeping the rodent problem down was in the public's best interest.

"Morning Mum," Hermione said as she entered the dining area by the Granger kitchen.

"Morning Hermione. Did we learn how to sleep in this year?"

Hermione rolled her eyes and laughed. "No Mum. Madam Pomphrey said its an anticipated after effect of the curse that hit me and the treatment. She thinks it should wear off in a week or two."

"Well, let's hope so. The daughter I remember was up at the crack of dawn even when she was a baby."

"Where's Daddy?"

"Shower."

"Oh," Hermione said as she sat down for her breakfast of cereal and fresh fruit.

"Hear from Lover Boy yet?" her Mother asked.

Hermione groaned. "Which one?" she chided back.

"The one trying to inspect your tonsils at the train station yesterday. You know, the one who you are supposedly head over heels for?"

"Oh," Hermione snarked, "that boy. As a matter of fact I got two letters last night. I got a wonderful one from that boy, my Harry. He's promised me he'd find a way for us to - er - get together this summer and if possible get together often. I also got a letter from Ron."

"Ah, the other boy in your life."

"Not after the Battle and his pathetic letter. Ron's dead to me," Hermione said darkly.

"And why is that, Sweetie?"

"The git acts like he owns me! He seems to think he has the right to not only claim me as his but to demand I accept that. Look, I was his friend. But just because a girl smiles at a boy doesn't mean the boy owns her, right?"

"Was it that bad?"

"Worse. His patronizing and self centered scribble basically said I would better spend my summer not hanging out with 'useless Muggles.' I'd be better off at his family's place. He meant you and Daddy!"

"Surely he did not!" Rose said in shock.

"Read like he did."

"Did you reply?"

"Told him I had not seen you or Daddy for all practical purposes in over two years. I am still your daughter and you still are my parents. If I am going to spend even part of this summer with a wizard boy, it's with Harry and not that so called and now former friend!"

"I'm sorry, Hermione."

Hermione shrugged. "Honestly, I think I got the pick of the litter. Harry understands me. Ron never did or even tried."

"Did you reply to Harry's letter?"

"Of course, Mum."

"And what did you say to him?"

"That I love him, miss him, want to kiss him and that as soon as I can get him alone I want to shag him senseless," Hermione quipped with a smirk.

"You didn't!"

"Okay. Well I didn't use the words 'shag' or 'senseless', but I think he'll get the meaning."

"Hermione Jane, your only sixteen! You've only just begun dating!"

"Mum, my virtue remains intact. As for sixteen - as I recall you told me you were sixteen when you first... As for dating? He's been my best friend since we were eleven. I've been in love with him for years and he's been in love with me. It's taken each of us a while to realize what we really felt and even longer to tell each other. And if you must know, Harry's been with me on every Hogsmeade visit, even when he didn't have permission. He even broke a date to spend time with me for a day in town. Tell me, how long were you and Daddy together before you..."

"We were older, Hermione."

"How long?"

"Erm..."

"Mother!"

"Second date."

"And your first time?"

"Th-third date."

"Were you in love then?"

"N-no."

"And with Daddy?"

"Then I was. We had known each other a while. Not nearly as long as you and Harry, but ... Oh, you got me, don't you?"

Hermione nodded. "I've known for a while it would be Harry, Mum. But it would only be Harry if - if he felt the same way about me. He does. I know he does. He can't lie to me if he tried. You may see it as moving fast, but in reality we've been moving slow. This isn't some teenage experimentation thing, Mum. Real deal. Long term. He will make you a grandmum one day in the not so distant future. I hope and pray it's many times over."

"And until then?"

"There are spells I can use. They're good for twenty-four hours. Physiologically speaking, that means that they prevent any conception arising from sex. It doesn't shut me down, it shuts him down for twenty-four hours. Then there are potions. Good for a month. Lots of girls take it regardless 'cause it also prevents menstruation and extends a woman's life time of fertility."

"How long?"



"Five to ten years depending upon how many years you use it. Can I ask you a question, Mum?"

Rose Granger nodded.

"Why am I an only child? Didn't you want more?"

"We did," a male voice said. Hermione turned and saw her Dad in the door and wondered how long he had been there. "We wanted more, Princess. We had you and wanted more. But..."

"I got sick, Hermione," Rose said. "Cancer. They fixed it but I could never have another wonderful child again. At least we had you!"

Breakfast was a long conversation about the family the Grangers wanted to have and could not followed by another regarding their plans for the Summer holiday. Hermione was told that the family planned to travel abroad for a couple of weeks in August. Her parents were so pleased she would be with them for weeks this summer as they missed her terribly. Hermione admitted she had missed them as well, although they should have known that as she said it in nearly every letter she wrote for the last two years. There was a moving moment that brought them all to tears when Robert Granger complained about how they never saw their little girl anymore and how that now that she was almost all grown up and had a serious boyfriend, this summer could be their last real time together as a family.

"Daddy," Hermione complained, "I will always be your little girl. I hope to marry him one day, to have his children, to be with him as a grandparent. But from when I was born until the day I finally die, I will always be your little girl. I do want you and Mum in my life. Things have just been ... difficult these last few years."

"You're sixteen, Hermione," Robert said. "You're sixteen and already a soldier in war. You should have had a few more years not to worry of such things."

Hermione nodded. "But such things happen. Were I not fighting, I'd be like most and fearing for the future. At least I and my friends are trying to do something."

"You're a Granger, Hermione. We always stand and fight for what is right. My only concern is you should have had a few more years just to be you before the world came down upon you." Before Hermione could reply, the doorbell rang and Robert rose from the table to answer it. It turned out to be Nymphadora Tonks.

A little over three hours later, Hermione realized that the world indeed was crashing down around her. Tonks told her and her parents that, while the enemy had suffered a major set back at the Department of Mysteries such that they could not mount a major operation probably for some months, they still had the manpower and resources to cause serious trouble on a limited scale. Intelligence had been received that the enemy was going to try and take out "The Ministry Six:" Harry Potter, Ron and Ginny Weasley, Luna Lovegood, Neville Longbottom and Hermione.

Five were considered reasonably safe for now provided they did not leave the protections on their homes. They were, however, going to be told of the threat. Hermione and her family were in immediate danger. The Order decided that it would be best if Hermione were to spend the summer in a safe house. She would not tell Hermione or her parents where, except that it was not where any of the other five were. Hermione was a little relieved at this as it meant she would not have to deal with Ron Weasley. Still, it was upsetting.

Worse, because of the protections on the safe house, her parents could not join her. The Order strongly recommended that the older Grangers leave the country on an extended holiday and would provide them with up to 500,000 Pounds to meet their needs. Because of Hermione, they were targets but so far the enemy was not operating overseas. It took hours, but eventually the three Grangers realized the true risks and agreed to the Order's plans for them.

Hermione packed three trunks with just about everything she owned. She did, however, leave behind clothes that no longer fit her as she

had filled out somewhat over the last year. She was allowed a long and tear filled goodbye with her parents and was told that arrangements would be made that would allow them to write to each other. Still crying uncontrollably, it was time for Hermione and her things to go. Tonks took her by the hand and the next second, she was somewhere else. She was too upset to look around at her new surrounding but was aware she was no longer at her parent's house. Tonks told her she had additional errands to run but that Hermione's host would be there shortly. With that said, Tonks vanished, leaving Hermione alone, terrified and in tears.

A couple of minutes later, a voice she thought she recognized began to bring her back to reality.

"Hermione?" a man's voice asked.

Hermione looked up at the source and immediately recognized the young man before her.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)Hermione Jane Granger, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96.

## CHAPTER FOUR: SURPRISE HOUSE GUEST

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1996. Potter Manor.

"HARRY!" Hermione practically squealed with joy as she dashed towards him, almost knocking him over as she launched herself into his arms and began kissing him furiously. Harry was as shocked as she was that she was here, but was not about to say anything. He was too busy enjoying the final long kiss. Eventually, the kiss had to break and Hermione leaned her head into Harry's chest. Harry could feel her shaking slightly and soon he felt some wetness about where her eyes would be. He was gently rubbing her back, trying his best not to get too aroused at the feeling of her bra just beneath the silky blouse she was wearing when he heard her sniff. She was crying.

"Hermione?" Harry asked, "what's wrong? Please don't tell me I that awful a kisser." She looked up at him and he gently wiped away her tears. "It seems every girl I kiss is reduced to tears," he said softly. His pathetic joke was rewarded with a smile on the one and only face he needed to see.

"Harry, you're a wonderful kisser," Hermione whispered. "Honestly. Fantastic! I could kiss you all day. No, that's not it. I'm just scared and confused is all, and then finding you here and - I went from utter devastation to sheer joy and - urg! - stupid hormones - and, well I'm a bit out of sorts is all."

"What happened?"

Hermione lay her head back into Harry's chest and he slowly felt her relax in his arms as she told him about Tonks visit and all that had led to her weeping in this strange place.

"She said this was a safe house and my parents could not come with me," Hermione said finally looking at Harry.

"Safer than Hogwarts," Harry said. "Had a long talk with the Head Elf this morning as well as the Historian. The wards on this place are amazing! Better than Hogwarts, maybe even the best in the world.

Only people I trust and who will not harm me can enter these lands. Muggles, unfortunately, cannot unless I leave to bring them here."

"And where are we?"

"Erm - seems this is my home, Hermione."

"The Dursleys?"

Harry laughed. "If they knew about this place, they'd have been kissing my arse since I was a baby. No, this apparently is Potter Manor, my ancestral home."

"How - how big is it?"

Harry could not resist the unintended double entendre. He felt the need to lighten the mood just a bit. "I'd like to think above average but it's not like I've ever measured it or that me and my mates compare ours to each other or something." Harry waited for the reaction and was soon rewarded with a slap to his chest.

"Harry James!" Hermione exclaimed glaring up at him, "I was not talking about your - your - er - manhood! I was talking about this bloody house!" She was blushing furiously, Harry saw, and he pulled her into a hug, although she resisted a little.

"I know," he admitted. "You're upset and I hoped my pathetic joke would - er - calm you down some." He could feel her relax in his arms.

"Blue humor?" she said. "I don't think I've ever heard an off color quip from you before."

"It worked though," Harry said holding her tighter.

"Yeah," she giggled. This was a recent development. Until he had finally told her how he truly felt, Harry was certain he had never once heard this girl giggle. He liked it. He liked it so much he cupped her chin and drew her into another long kiss. When they finally broke apart, she smiled with her eyes closed for a moment and sighed.

"That was nice," she whispered. "Once again, Potter, how big is this place?"

"Don't really know," Harry shrugged. "Only got here late last night. After breakfast Tonks said she had some errands to run and I've been looking around. Haven't seen even half of it from what I'm told and I haven't even set foot outside."

"Surely you've been curious? Surely you asked someone?"

"Indeed I did." Harry smirked as he knew not telling her was driving her just a little crazy.

"Harry," she growled, "who did you ask? What did they tell you?"

"Well, I asked Darda. He's the Head Elf in charge of the Estate Staff. Also asked Elda. She's the personal chef for the private apartments. Then there was William the librarian and Marta, who's the Potter historian. Between them I got a fair idea.

"This house is huge, of course. It's one of the largest manors in Britain and the largest in Wizarding Britain. It's been in the family for over three hundred years. There are also twenty guest houses and a Chalet by the sea. There's thousands of acres of gardens and parks. The nearest edge of the property is four miles from here."

"Four miles?" Hermione said in disbelief.

"That's to the front, I'm told. The back of the property is on the coast, sixteen miles from here and the side boundaries are five miles in either direction. I was told that this property is approximately a quarter million acres or roughly three hundred and ninety square miles. And, there is a fishing village on the coast. It has a population of three thousand or more, mostly witches and wizards. All of the land is under the most powerful protective wards known. Not even Voldemort can get to us here. Not even Dumbledore, or so I'm told."

Harry noticed that Hermione seemed to be staring at him in either shock or disbelief and maybe both. He took advantage of the rare

silence from his girlfriend to kiss her again. That seemed to work. When they finally broke apart, she was back in the moment.

“That’s huge, Harry, you know?”

Harry shrugged. “Yesterday I was relatively poor,” he said. “I knew I had a trust fund that was paying for school and such, but knew nothing about where that fund truly came from. Today, I awake to find all this. Bit of a shock, really. At least you’re here now to share this with me.”

“Harry, I got your letter, you know.”

“Really?”

Hermione nodded. She then gave him an accusing look. “You didn’t send Tonks to get me, did you? That wasn’t just a plan for us to spend the summer together. Not that I mind, but if it was it was a bit cruel.”

“I swear, Hermione, I had no idea,” Harry pleaded. “All Tonks told me was she was going to pick up some things and buy me some decent clothes. I had no idea you were one of those -er - things.”

“Fair enough. Did she tell you anything specific as to why you’re here? Why I’m here?”

Harry shook his head. “She said she would later. It seemed more important to get me here, and you I guess than to explain it at the time.”

“Did you tell her about me?”

Harry nodded. “She asked at breakfast just before she left. I told her. I told her we’ve finally started going out. I told her I love you more than anything and have for a long time, but was afraid you didn’t feel the same way. I told her now that I know you do, I never want to lose you - ever and that I plan to marry you.”

"You think that might have had something to do with her coming for me?"

Harry shrugged. "Possible. Don't know, though."

Hermione sought out Harry's lips for a long, slow kiss and was not disappointed. When they finally broke apart, Harry asked: "And what was that for?"

"All kinds of things," she said softly. "For loving me. For wanting to be with me. For not hiding me from others. For not being embarrassed of or ashamed..."

"Hermione, ashamed of what?"

"I'm not exactly beautiful or girly or..."

"Hermione! Don't you ever say that to me. You are and always have been the most beautiful girl I've ever seen."

"What about Cho?"

Harry could not tell if she was joking or accusing. He sensed a female trap. Hermione had never set him up for one before, but he had seen her do that with others, namely Ron. "I didn't know how you felt about me then, sorry. My fault, I suppose. I'd rather have you as my best friend than not at all and was afraid that - well - that if I tried to be more than that and you didn't feel the same way, I'd lose you. Cho's pretty. She was definitely willing for a time. But she is not you, Hermione. Not even close."

"You didn't do..."

"No! I'm willing to bet that the night she kissed me, I could have. I didn't. I came back to the Common Room pretty quick."

"Why?"

"Felt guilty. I felt somehow I was betraying you. Felt the same way on Valentine's Day. Might be why I agreed to see you even though I was



supposed to be on a romantic date. No, it was why. Deep down I think I wanted her to dump me and be done with it so I could one day be with you with a clear mind and heart.”

Hermione kissed him again. “Thank you, Harry,” she said with a smile when they again broke apart.

Harry smirked getting a questioning look from Hermione. “Much as I am enjoying standing here and kissing your oh so kissable lips,” he said, “I think we should get you situated and maybe get something to eat.”

“No more kisses?” Hermione pouted.

“Loads, Love,” Harry smiled at her. “But we need to get your things away and such and...”

“Harry? Do you know how long we’ll be here?”

“If it were up to me it would be for the rest of our lives. As near as I can tell, we’re here for the summer.”

Hermione gave him a smile he could not place.

“Darda?” Harry called.

The elf appeared immediately.

“Darda, this is Hermione my girlfriend. It seems she will be staying here for a while and has loads of stuff that needs to be moved to her room. Can you see to it?”

“Of course, Milord,” the elf said. He then turned to Hermione and added, “It is indeed a pleasure to meet the beauty that has captured Lord Potter’s heart!” With that he gently took Hermione’s right hand in his and kissed her knuckles briefly. Hermione was blushing.

“Harry?” Hermione asked. “What kind of elf is this?”

"I am an elf," Darda said. "The Eldar kind or High Elf, as all elves were intended to be when the Creator first gave us breath."

"But all the elves I've ever seen never looked or spoke like..." Hermione's voice trailed off.

"You speak of the House Elves. They are kin to us, it is true. But we are not them and they not us. They are slaves, bound by centuries old dark magic to serve wizards. We true elves serve our family out of love and not magical compulsion."

"Why would anyone enslave you?"

"I understand your lack of knowledge of this world, Miss," Darda said earning a scowl from Hermione who hated anyone suggesting she did not know something, even when it was true. "While there are those in your race who would think as you, there are others who do not. A thousand winters ago, a Dark Witch arose who believed that elves and goblins and others should be servants of her and her kind. We elves had served our families for ages. We served our families as brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters in spirit if not in blood. Said Dark Witch enslaved us and taught others how.

"Four hundred years ago, the then Lord Potter discovered this secret and how to return us to ourselves instead of the simpering, semi-literate creatures the enslavement magic had created. It was simple. Rather than treat us as property, he treated us as family. Those who choose to serve are adopted into the Potter family. Those who do not, work elsewhere."

"You're not paid?"

"Was your mother paid for caring for you? Was your father? We are cared for and the love of our family is all the pay we require. The House buys us our clothes and food, provides us with healing when we need it and helps us take care and raise our children. It is all anyone should want in life, Miss."

"So your not bound?"

“Indeed we are, Miss. We are magically bound to serve the Potters. But it was our choice. As young ones we were not bound as servants. When we came of age we were given the choice to join our parents and family or to seek our future elsewhere. Most of us stayed. There was a ceremony and the Lord Potter adopted us into the family which created the bond between us and our family. Alas, the last Lord died seven and a half years ago and there has been no bonding rite for our young since. Many have gone to work with the families in Pottersport. My youngest son and daughter work in one of the shops. They are happy too and my wife and I see them quite often.”

“And what about the House Elves?” Hermione asked. “Can they become like you?”

“Alas, for most the answer is no. They must first of all want to be like us. Most House Elves are well treated and live quite content with who and what they are. To free them so that the process could begin to restore them is cruelty of the most extreme kind. It is more merciful to kill a House Elf than to free one that does not wish for freedom.”

“Why?”

“A House Elf that is granted freedom it does not want suffers horribly, Miss. The pain is constant and unbearable. Many do not live but a few months as they lose interest in everything, including food and die from starvation and heartache. The severed bond is like an open wound to them and like an open wound, it bleeds them to death. Only the most vile and spiteful of humans would free an elf that does not wish to be free.”

Harry heard a snuffle from Hermione as she leaned into him. He could tell she was crying.

“I - I didn’t know! I didn’t know! I didn’t want to hurt them! I wanted to help them!”

“What’s wrong Hermione?”

"Th-the hats. The hats I made all year. They're all gone! Each time I thought I had helped an Elf and instead ... I didn't want that!"

"Shhhh," Harry said holding his girlfriend close. "Don't be upset..."

"BUT I AM! I hurt all those elves! I didn't mean to and I did! Now they're all like Winky and IT'S MY FAULT!!"

"Hermione, you didn't hurt any of them."

"Don't patronize me Potter! I most certainly did!"

"Didn't."

"DID!"

"Dobby took all of your little hats. Dobby was the only Elf cleaning in the tower and he took the hats. He's free. He chose to be so the hats did not affect him. Not one Elf was harmed. Not a one."

"Dobby took them?" Hermione asked looking up at Harry.

Harry nodded. "He admires you in a way."

"He - he does."

"Most witches and wizards think nothing about others, you always think about others. He didn't like your ideas, but he thinks your heart is in the right place."

"He - he was treated so terribly by his Masters," Hermione sniffed. "And what Crouch did to Winky was so selfish and cruel and I thought - I thought it was like that for all of them and wanted to help them all and..."

"Miss Hermione," Darda said. Hermione looked at the Elf. "You were trying to help our brothers and sisters?"

Hermione nodded.

“There are few who ever tried. One of Milord’s ancestors did. Few others. Many House Elves are well treated and quite content with their lives. But the Slave Bond foisted upon them allows them to be the victims of cruel Masters. Hogwarts is a haven for them. But only because the enslavers have kept this place secret. Few Elves know of Potter Manor and that the Eldar life and that they can be Eldar too, free yet bonded.”

“Harry!” Hermione said, “we have to help them!”

“Hermione!”

“Not all of them. Not at once. But there are two we can help.”

Harry looked into Hermione’s eyes and immediately knew what she was on about. “Dobby and Winky?”

Hermione nodded.

“Darda?” Harry asked. “We know of two House Elves, both of whom were freed by their Masters. One is my friend Dobby and the other is his friend Winky. Could they come here? Could they become Eldar like yourselves?”

“They must come of their own free will, Milord. They must choose the bond of their own free will. But yes, if they do, I am certain it can be so. You say this Dobby is your friend?”

“Yes Darda.”

“Call him.”

“Call him?”

“I’ve adjusted the Wards. Call him and if he wants, he will be able to come here.”

Harry thought about it for only a moment. “Dobby?” he called.

A second later and there was a audible popping sound and the House Elf called Dobby stood before Harry. The elf wore a tea cozy for a hat, an old jumper that Harry had long ago out grown, leather shorts and two miss matched socks, each in bright colors. The outfit defined the term “clash.”

“The Great Harry Potter calls Dobby?” Dobby asked as he bowed low. “How can Dobby be of help to Harry Potter, Sir?”

“Darda, this is Dobby,” Harry said.

Dobby turned to see who Harry was speaking to and immediately his eyes went wide with shock.

“It cannot be,” Dobby said, tears in his voice as he knelt before Darda, “you cannot be. Is you Eldar? Is you one of the good and wise of legend?”

“I am, my Son,” Darda said.

“You calls Dobby that? Dobby am unworthy of it, oh Great One. But Dobby not understands. The Eldar of legend are gone. Gone for ages, they is. They once served with honor and love as free willed Elvin kind. Before the Dark Times. Before evil Wizards begins to treasure slavery over love. Before they’s try to enslave. Dark Time came, the Eldar is destroyed or leave this world and we House Elves was left behind in bondage.

“But it can’t be true. You can’t have returned to this world for the Dark Times is not over.”

“It is true, my Son,” Darda said. “I am Eldar as are all of the Elvin kin that live and work here at Potter Manor. There are over two thousand of us here, mothers, fathers, husbands, wives and children. But we have not returned from some mythical and far off land. We have always been here.”

“But all who remain were slaved,” Dobby protested. “Only House Elves remained!”

“Indeed,” Darda said. “And my ancestors and the ancestors of all Elves here were once House Elves such as yourself. They were enslaved by the evil spell. But long ago, a Lord Potter discovered the injustice, freed our ancestors who chose to be re-bond to his family by the ancient Eldar rite. My Ancestors chose that rite. They ceased being the property of the Potter Estate and became part of the Potter family. When they took the ancient familial oaths, when the ancient bond formed, they transformed from the corrupt form of House Elf back to the form as nature intended. They were once again Eldar.”

“Dobby,” Harry said, “we would like you and Winky to have this opportunity. We would like you to join our family and hopefully become as you were meant to be as well.”

Dobby threw himself into Harry’s legs, pleading he was not worthy of such an honor but he would do it for the Great Harry Potter.

“And Winky?” Hermione asked.

“Winky be in a right state, Miss,” Dobby said. “Being free cuts her like a knife. She drinks to dull a pain that can’t be dulled for her. She blames the Great Harry Potter for her plight because it were his wand she be founds with. For another, she might. Not for Harry Potter, Miss.”

Hermione bit her lip and was lost in thought for a time.

“Dobby?” she asked. “Will she live?”

“Dobby fears not, Miss. Dobby tries to help Winky, but Winky be refusing. Dobby offers to be Winky’s husband, but Winky be not thinking Winky be worthy of love. Winky’s being dyings Miss. And a part of Dobby shall go with Winky.”

“She will not be part of Harry Potter’s family?”

“No Miss.”

“How about Hermione Granger’s?”

"W - Winky might, Miss. Winky be thinking you's kind to Winky and appreciates your trying. Winky might."

"Could you ask her? If she agrees, could you bring her here?"

"If Harry Potter wishes, Dobby shall try."

"I do, Dobby," Harry said.

"Then Dobby shall try."

"We await your return, my friend."

With a slight crack, Dobby was gone.

"I'm a little surprised at you, Hermione," Harry said. "I never would have believed you would be in favor of bonding with elves."

"I'm opposed to slavery," Hermione said. "I am opposed to any situation where one man lords over others and treats them like vermin just because they can. I'm opposed to pet owners who abuse their pets, parents or guardians who abuse children. I always will be, Harry. But, I am not opposed to a relationship based upon kindness, caring, compassion or even love. Dobby may be free, but I think there is a bond between you and him. You are clearly his Master and he is clearly and willingly your servant, but you treat him with respect and as an equal in most things. You do not abuse your trust like others."

"I did not know about how painful it is for most of them to be free. Had I known that, my focus would have been solely on seeing them treated with the respect they deserve, not freeing them. Winky is clearly in pain and it's all because she was let go. Aside from Death Eaters, I wouldn't wish that upon anyone."

"So you're okay with this Hermione? You're okay with Dobby serving me and Winky serving you?"

"Can we still pay them? Buy them things?"

"Don't see why not."



"Then I'm okay with it."

"What if they don't want pay?"

"Darda said that the estate pays for their stuff, that's like paying, right?"

"It is indeed, Miss," Darda said. "We have no need for trifles, just a place to live with our families, some nice furnishings, clothes and the like and we are content."

"And an occasional trifle in appreciation?" Hermione asked.

"They are, of course, most welcome."

There was a loud crack and Dobby appeared holding an unconscious female House Elf in his arms. It was clear Dobby was crying.

"Winky," Hermione practically shrieked. "Dobby what's wrong with her," she added with tears forming in her eyes and voice.

"Over edge," Dobby said crying, "drank herself over edge to ease pain. D - Dobby can't fix Winky. Winky be broken. Winky be dying, Miss."

"No!" Hermione cried. "Winky? I want you to be my family! Can you hear me? I want you to be my family!" There was no response from the elf who was reeking of filth, but Hermione seemed not to care. She looked at Darda, "Can you help her?" she said with tears streaming down her face.

"I cannot," Darda said. "But there is one who might be able to. **CONSTANCE? EMERGENCY!**"

There was almost immediately a popping sound and a new elf appeared. She was Eldar, with long blonde hair pulled into a ponytail. She was dressed all in white and was carrying a large bag of some sort.

"Milord Potter, Miss Hermione," Darda began, "this is Constance, our Chief Healer. She may be able to help this poor elf maid."

Milord," she said bowing slightly. She then turned and bowed towards Hermione saying: "Milady."

Constance then turned to her patient and began waving hands and muttering over the seemingly lifeless elf. No one kept track of the time as Constance continued her waving and mutterings. She soon stopped.

"This elf was freed by her Master against her will?" Constance asked.

"Yes," Hermione said. "She's been miserable ever since."

"And when did this happen?"

"When did what happen?"

"When was she freed?"

"Almost two years ago," Hermione replied.

"She is a very strong elf to have lasted so long when her freeing was not by her desire. Most would have died ages ago. Do you wish to save her Miss?"

"I - I do."

"Then I will revive her. She shall be given the choice to bond with you. If she so chooses, she will live. But here, she must choose the Eldar oath. It is the law. The bond of the House Elf works not beneath these wards. Do you understand?"

"I - I don't know," Hermione replied hating that she truly did not.

"She must be willing to bond as the Eldar. To bond as a House Elf will not suffice. The bond is of her will, not your's Miss. Should she refuse, all I can do is make her comfortable in death."

"Please," Hermione begged, "give her the choice!"

Constance seemed to wave her hands over Winky and Winky slowly awoke from her stupor.

"Winky?" Hermione asked.

"M-miss Hermione? Where is Winky? This not being Hogwarts."

"You are with me, Winky. I've learned you are unhappy. Is this true?"

"Winky is unhappy. Winky wishes to die. No one be wanting Winky."

"You're wrong, Winky. I want you. I want you as part of my family. I want you as my sister and ... and my handmaiden - I guess. Do you wish to be a family again, Winky?"

"Winky do! But no one will haves Winky!"

"I will, if you wish it!"

"But you's not from a line! You nots understands us!"

Hermione was taken aback for a moment. "Maybe I'm not," she said, "and maybe I don't. But I need you, Winky, and want you to be my sister and part of my family. I can and will offer you this."

"You will? Miss, you've cared for Winky when no other witch or wizard would. You offer this?"

"Of my own free will I do. Will you accept it of your own free will?"

"This being no trick?"

"No trick. This is the real deal. I only ask that you take the Eldar oath. I wish to adopt you into my family and not bind you as slave. Can you do that?"

"Eldars are gone, Miss."

“They are not. They are here. They say if you accept the Eldar Oath of your own free will and of such will become my sister or such, then you can be happy again.”

“Winky wants a family agains, Miss.”

“Do you accept me as family?”

“You’s always kinds to Winky. Winky wants it. Whinky accepts it.”

“Dobby,” Darda said, “do you accept Harry Potter as your family?”

“D - Dobby does, Eldar.”

“Then each of you take your elf’s hand.”

Harry and Hermione did so and as they did, Darda began a chant in a language neither had heard before:

“Elas enara kalan bitul,

Cilas bitran enara,

Silur chasandi emul,

Taran bitrar e namar,

Sistran Kazan a nimu,

Chosay ekan zemara,

Magyara sem basu,

Ti shem tokai dinsar!

“Hermione ne Winky kontul,

Ne Winky sa Hermione nomar,

Winke ne Hermione sunontul,

Se endanda fonar senar.

“Harry ne Dobby te kontul,

Ne Dobby sa Harry e nomar,

Dobby ne Harry e sunontul,

Se endanda forar senar.”

A flash of magical light passed between Harry and Dobby and Hermione and Winky.

“The bond is completed,” Darda said.

“I will need to take these two to the infirmary,” Constance added.

“W-why,” Hermione asked.

“The Dark Magic that bound them as House Elves will begin to dissipate over the next few days, Miss. As it does, they will sleep and will need to be monitored as they transform into Eldar.”

“T-transform?”

“They will gradually assume their true form, that which magic intended. It’s not unlike a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. But, they must be watched as the transformation occurs.”

“How - how long?”

“Dobby should take about a week. Given Winky’s condition, she’ll take longer. Three weeks tops.”

“But they’ll be okay, won’t they?”

“They should be,” Constance said. “I will do everything possible to make sure of that, Miss.”

"Thank you," Hermione said. With that, Constance popped away with the two House Elves.

"If you're not needing me, Milord," Darda said.

"Yes of course," Harry replied. "Thank you. We really do appreciate it."

"You are welcome." With that Darda was gone as well leaving Harry and Hermione alone.

"So," Harry began.

"So," Hermione replied.

"It's around lunch time," Harry continued. "How about a spot of lunch and then I can show you around?"

"Sounds like a plan," she said smiling at her boyfriend.

"Right, lunch it is! Elda?"

A female Elf appeared before them. "Yes, Milord?"

"Is it possible to have lunch served outside?"

"Tis no trouble, Milord. Fancy showing your lady guest the view from the veranda?"

"I haven't been out there, I just thought it's a nice day."

"It is indeed. There are tables out there. I can bring your food to you. The view of the gardens and fields beyond is lovely. Perfect for a quiet romantic lunch. Here," she said handing each of them a small book.

"What's this?" Hermione and Harry asked together.

"Menu," Elda said. "Lunch menu to be exact. Go and find your table and look it over and when you're ready, I'll cook what you want."

“Erm, okay,” Harry replied taking Hermione by the hand and leading her towards the veranda.

The new couple walked through to the back of the Manor and out upon the expansive veranda. They chose a table with an umbrella at the far end with an unobstructed view of the landscape beyond and perused their menus. They were both amazed at the choices and after several minutes chose something they each recognized. Elda seemed to know when they were ready and appeared and took their orders and told them it would be twenty minutes or so before their food arrived. The couple looked out over the gardens and green fields beyond.

“You own all this,” Hermione asked looking at the huge building to the other side as well.

“Apparently,” Harry shrugged. “I have never been here before and if this place is as big as I’m told...”

“What?”

“Well, I could take the whole summer and still not see all of it.”

“It’s a bit much,” Hermione admitted. “But it is very pretty here.”

“Anywhere would be with you,” Harry said and was rewarded with a blush from his girlfriend.

“Harry?”

“Hmmm?”

“How are you doing, really?”

“What do you mean?”

“Sirius.”

"Oh. Oddly, not too bad. I had a huge row with Professor Dumbledore when we got back that night, mostly 'cause Sirius died and I thought that had I'd been told things, that might not have happened. I pretty much busted up his office over it. But..."

"But?" Hermione asked genuinely concerned.

"But, when I left I went to the hospital wing and you and the others... Madam Pomphrey," Harry started tearing up, "she told me she didn't know if you would make it. I - I could not lose you, Hermione. I can't. I can't lose you and live on. I - I kind of forgot about Sirius because I had to be with you and had to be there to help you come back. I wasn't told to or asked to, I had to.

"Second Year when you were petrified, I knew you could come back, but I spent all my spare time with you anyway. This time.... I wanted to be there when ... when whatever happened. I wanted you to know that I love you so damn much, Hermione. I was so worried and in such pain because you were not you... I forgot all about what happened to Sirius.

"Then you woke up. I told you what I should have told you a long time ago and you told me what I hoped you would tell me. I told you I love you and want to marry you and I meant and mean that! And you told me the same thing.

"I was so relieved you were alive! I was so elated you loved me too! I continued to forget about Sirius as you got better and as we spent time together. Time with you was and is all I wanted and I finally had it. Sirius was not that big a deal.

"I got back to my Dursley prison after school was out. I knew I had to think about Sirius. I did. I thought about a lot of things. And all I got were questions. Worse, there were no answers. None that made sense anyway. So the night I got back, I began writing them down and - well - I don't like where they are leading me to think. Here!" he added handing Hermione his notebook. "Read it for yourself and tell me if you can make any sense of this mess."

"Harry?" Hermione pleaded, but he cut her off.



"You are the smartest person I know of any age. If anyone can see a reasonable explanation for the mess my life has been, you can. Please?" he pleaded.

"O - Okay, Harry," she said. She opened the notebook and began to read.

She finished as their lunch arrived. "Harry?" she asked, "is all this true?"

He nodded.

"It doesn't make sense," she began.

"Tell me about it."

"I mean it shouldn't make sense! It only makes sense if someone wanted you to suffer for some reason. Someone wanted to keep you down!"

"And where does that point to?"

"It can't be right! It can't be! But the only logical conclusion is..."

"Dumbledore," Harry finished. Hermione nodded.

"But why?"

"That being the great question," Harry said. "No idea."

Hermione nodded. She then began to eat lost in thought. As she ate, she saw a snowy owl with whom she was well familiar land on Harry's shoulder with an envelope attached to its leg.

"What you got Girl," Harry asked the bird as he removed the letter. "Letter from Hermione, it seems." Hermione looked up at him and he could see her beginning to blush furiously as he opened the envelope.

“Obviously, she’s here and will not need a written reply,” Harry said to the bird, noting Hermione’s reaction. “Go have a hunt. You always seem to know when I need you.” The owl seemed to hoot a reply and soared off into the sky.

Harry noted Hermione biting her lower lip as he began to read her letter. He did his best to hide any reaction when he knew what it implied. She wanted him. Not just as a friend either. She wanted him physically. Truth be told, he thought, he had wanted her too. For ages it seemed. Still... She wrote the letter not knowing she would be with him less than a day later. Maybe ... maybe it was wait later, not really now as the letter implied.

He smiled at Hermione, who was still looking at him and was clearly expecting him to say something and was clearly afraid of what that something might be.

“This one’s definitely a keeper,” Harry said with a smile. “Then again, I’ve kept all your letters.”

“Th-that’s all?” she asked. “That’s all you have to say?”

Harry stared into her eyes and nodded. “For now,” he said with a mischievous smile.

Their lunch soon ended and Harry offered to give Hermione a tour of the place, admitting he had only seen one and a half floors or so and none of the grounds. She agreed. Harry noted she seemed very nervous and was pretty sure why that was. He knew of the one place that should get her mind off of things, such as what she said in that wonderful letter. He took her straight to the Library and was not disappointed as he watched her jaw drop in awe.

“Largest magical one in all Britain, I’m told,” he said. He had to say something as he was convinced she was going to start to drool.

“R-really?” she asked. It was the first time she spoke since the letter arrived.

"So I'm told. William is the Librarian. He says the magical section is larger even than Hogwarts. The non-magical... You ever hear of something called a Gutenberg Bible?"

Hermione nodded. "First book ever printed," she said.

"Apparently, I've got one here."

"Y-you do?"

"First folio Shakespeare's as well."

"But Harry, there are no..."

"Apparently there are and I have them."

"Oh my!"

"Hate to tell you this love, but I think this is one library you can't read you're way through. Too many books. Well over three hundred thousand."

"Really?"

"William says so. I haven't counted of course.

"Er, of course."

"What do you think?"

"It's wonderful, Harry. Can I ... can I use it?"

"Of course."

The girl squealed with delight and jumped into Harry. Her bear hug was now combined with a passionate kiss.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Hermione Jane Granger, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96.

## CHAPTER FIVE: AN INTERESTING AFTERNOON

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1996. Potter Manor.

As their kiss broke apart, Hermione took hold of Harry's hands and placed them on her breasts. Harry was stunned both that she would do this and how wonderful they felt beneath his hands. She seemed to sigh at his touch and a part of Harry wondered what it would be like without the blouse and bra between his fingers and the real thing. He looked into her brown eyes and saw an expression he could not quite place. She seemed to tremble and he might have thought that she was scared or at least a little apprehensive or nervous. But there was something else.

"I meant what I said to you in my letter," she whispered. "I want this."

"You - you're sure?"

She nodded and pulled him into a kiss. As she was kissing him passionately, he could feel her working on the belt to his jeans. He knew that the hand-me-downs from his cousin were so large that once the belt was unbuckled, the pants would fall to his ankles, which they did. The kiss continued long after his pants had fallen to the wayside. When she finally broke it off, he looked and saw that she was in the same state of undress as he was. His reaction to seeing her uncovered below the waist, although any real view being obscured by her now free hanging blouse, was immediate. If Harry was not blushing furiously at this, he was moments later when she pressed herself against him. Part of him did not even want to look Hermione in the eye.

"Harry," she said pressing against him even more, "what's wrong?"

"I - well," Harry began too embarrassed to finish.

"You mean this?" she said grinding against him, although given their difference in height it was more like her belly than her groin, still...

"Er," Harry knew what she meant. He was afraid he seemed too eager and too interested in the physical stuff.

"Harry," she whispered, making sure he was looking into her eyes, "don't be embarrassed. I'm not - well not really. You are this way because of me and that - that makes me - er - feel much better about myself. I never thought a boy would ever..." She stopped as Harry pulled her into a kiss. She seemed to melt into his arms and did not care. Slowly and gently the two undressed each other even further. Soon all Harry was still wearing was his boxer shorts and Hermione just her bra and knickers. They kissed some more as each of them explored each other with their hands. Hermione pressed in close to Harry, so their explorations were largely limited to their upper torsos, but both of them enjoyed the experience, both the exploring of their love and the being explored.

Hermione broke the kiss after what seemed like ages. She stepped back from Harry and in response to the disappointed look on his face, she winked at him while biting her lower lip. Harry always had a weakness for that expression, whether it was a sign of her inherent shyness or intense concentration, for it appeared on both occasions. She turned her back to him and he watched in silence as her hands reached behind her back and found the clasp to her bra. She unclasped it and then slowly removed it allowing it to fall to the floor. She then bent over slightly and Harry watched as her hands slid her knickers off of her hips as they too fell to the floor. As Harry admired what he considered the most perfect bum on the face of the planet, it hit him that even though she was still facing away from him, she was naked. His arousal now ached. Until today, the only naked women Harry had ever seen were still photographs in the dirty magazines he had nicked from his cousin. This one was his Hermione. She was real. She was close. She was offering herself to him.

She was just beyond his reach as she slowly turned around. Harry's eyes watched her face at first. She was really chewing on her lip and was blushing, yet somehow managed to have an almost impish grin. She clearly could not decide what to do with her hands as he saw them move back and forth from her sides to behind her back. She made no effort to cover herself. She clearly wanted him to check her out! He didn't need to be told as his eyes slowly traveled down her body to her neck, shoulders and then... She had large, wonderful breasts, he thought. Not too large, but larger than he had imagined.

They seemed to hold themselves up somehow and he could see her large nipples were practically pointing at him. Lower he admired her firm stomach before his eyes reach her most intimate of places.

Harry had seen photos. Practically all the girls he had seen had hair down there. Hermione did not so he had a clear view of the real her, the part that made her a woman. He definitely liked what he saw. "You're - you're so beautiful," he said softly still unable to believe she was really standing naked before him.

"Th-thank you," she whispered back meaning it. Harry could see she was now staring at his shorts. He knew why. He couldn't hide what she was doing to him if he tried. "So, Mr. Potter," Hermione said with a laugh in her voice, "is that a wand in your shorts or do you like what you see?"

"I like," Harry said.

"I want to see you too," she said softly. Harry immediately dropped his shorts and his soon to be manhood was exposed in its full glory. Harry saw Hermione's jaw drop. He was definitely bigger than she was expecting. She really did not know what to expect considering she had never seen a real one before. "Wow," she remarked. "Are you bigger than - er - normal?"

"Told you, I don't compare winkies," Harry quipped. "And I'm a bloke, so of course I think I'm hung like a horse even if I'm not."

"Well," she said slowly closing the distance, "whether it is or it is not, I am impressed, Mr. Potter." She was now inches away and as Harry gazed into her captivating brown eyes, he felt her delicate hand touch him. He hissed a bit as the touch sent a wave of pleasure he had not anticipated. She was staring up at him and gently and softly stroking him. He didn't think she was trying to get him to finish, but the touch was more than he was ready for. Try as he might, he could not stop what he knew was seconds away.

"Hermione?" he squeaked as he looked down at what she was doing. Her gaze followed his. A second later, he groaned.

Hermione gasped as she saw three large squirts of a white fluid shoot from him as she felt him tense and shudder beneath her touch. The warm fluid hit her on the stomach and oozed onto her hand. It was very warm and gooey. She had not intended that, not yet at least. Still, the mere thought she had caused Harry to lose control on her was far more of a turn on than she had expected.

"I'm sorry, Hermione," Harry said. "I didn't mean to..."

"Sush, Love," she whispered. "It's okay. Really!"

"But..."

"We have all afternoon, Love. All summer really. Now, don't you want to touch me?"

Harry nodded as he pulled her into a kiss. His right hand rapidly but gently found its way to her breast and as he began to finally caress the real and bare thing, she rewarded him with a moan. He wanted more of her and realized that much as he enjoyed kissing her, this position did not allow him to be close and to explore her at the same time. Slowly, he worked his way behind her, pulling her close to him, as close as possible as now both hands had access to her ample breasts. She turned her face towards him, her mouth slightly open and eyes half closed as he kissed her neck. She shuddered and moaned beneath his touch and he soon found her lips with his. One of her hands was in his hair, running through it as he decided to repay her for earlier. His right hand slipped from its toy and slowly worked down her body as he continued to kiss her. His right index finger found his intended target, the soft folds of her womanhood. It slowly parted the soft flesh and he could feel her warmth and wetness. He brushed against a hard wet nub and she gasped and shuddered. He began to rub it gently hoping this was what she wanted. She let out a long soft moan of pleasure and he could see joy in her wet eyes that stared at him from mere inches away.

She was soon biting her lip, trying not to gasp or moan too loud as he continued to work her up. She was trying not to fall down as she felt pleasure beginning to build. "More," she whispered with a shudder. Harry took the hint and his finger now entered her for the first time.



He could feel her whole body quiver in response as a long moan escaped her. A second finger soon joined the first, easing in and out in response to her reactions. "Faster," she begged. Harry obliged and soon she was gasping for air. A moan was soon followed by a stuttering "Oh G-g-god!" She was now thrusting into his hand and he was trying to hold her up. "GOD!" she moaned. Her breathing was faster and hitched. She seemed to be trembling non stop and Harry was convinced the only reason she was still standing was that he was holding her up. Her bum was grinding into his groin and he could feel himself rapidly becoming aroused. She obviously felt it too as with each second, she seemed to encourage it with her grinding. She was soon panting and moaning at the same time, if that was possible. "Oh GOD! HARRY!" she called as she went rigid for a few seconds. She then seemed to relax completely and her hand found his and removed it from her.

She turned to him, pressed close against him and drew him into a kiss as soon as she caught her breath. She could feel he was ready again. "Thank you, My Love," she said when they finally broke. "You were amazing. What?" she then asked as he seemed to frown.

"I - I didn't last as long as you did," he said. "I - I don't want to disappoint you."

"You won't, Harry. I might have over done it getting you turned on. Then again, it might just have been... Well, I read sometimes that happens to a boy. Especially early on when they lack - er - experience. I also read there's something I can do that might - er - prevent such a rapid response. You interested?" It was a rhetorical question at it was clear by what was pressing against her again that he was. "Have a seat on the couch," she suggested. Harry sat down. As he did, Hermione knelt before him and spread his legs apart so she could get closer. "Now," she said with a blush, "there are two things we can do. I think this one is easier on you. Trust me?"

Harry nodded. As he did he watched as she leaned forward. Her face was soon rubbing into his groin. He closed his eyes wondering where this was going and how it could help. He felt something wet at the base of his shaft and opened his eyes to see Hermione slowly licking her way up his swollen member. He could not believe his eyes.

Hermione? Hermione was doing this to him? She reached the tip and he watched and shuddered as her tongue swirled slowly around him. 'Would she really?' He thought. She did. He could not believe it as he watched her take him slowly into her mouth. It was so warm and wet and wonderful as more of him entered. She stopped about halfway and slowly pulled back, warm, wet and tight around him before pushing down again, further this time earning a gasp from Harry. Each time, she pulled back and then pulled more of him into her until the fifth time when she managed to take him all in. She repeated the deep thrust all the way to his base three more times in a row, each generating a low moan from a still surprised Harry. She then began to alternate between shallow and deep thrusts and increased her pace. Harry was groaning with pleasure almost each time and quickly felt the crescendo beginning. A part of his mind told him to say something as he felt the end approaching rapidly.

"Hermione?" he gasped. "I'm going to..." He got no further. She had not stopped at all and he could not control himself as he fell over the edge and exploded into her mouth. He was sure she would be mad as he gasped for air.

"Mmmmmmm." she seemed to moan. To his surprise, she did not stop even though it was clear to him he was finished for the moment. She slowed down, to be sure, but kept at him for at least another minute. When she finally did release him from her wonderful mouth, Harry was quite spent. She crawled up into his lap and snuggled against him for a moment. She then kissed him and looked into his eyes.

"Well?"

"You're amazing," he said softly. She smiled. "You were wonderful! Wow!"

"Thanks," she said blushing. "I wasn't so sure seeing as I've never done any of this before."

"Did you like doing that?"

She nodded slowly. "I didn't think I would that much," she admitted. "But I did. I really wasn't sure about when you - you know. It was a little icky, but... It's such a turn on making you do that!"

"So - so how does that help?"

"Tires you out a bit, Love," Hermione said. "A tired Harry is supposed to take longer."

"Oh. And what was the other plan?"

"Well, you could always think of Umbridge being naked while you're making love to me," she said cheekily.

"Ug! That wouldn't help! Not unless you don't even want me to be able to start at all!"

Hermione giggled. "Well, we don't want that, do we. So I guess it's tire you out."

"I guess. Now, how about I repay the favor?"

"How?"

"Same thing I did last time, but I want to taste and not feel?"

"Really?" Hermione gasped. Harry nodded and pushed her gently down onto the couch lying on her back. He kissed her deeply for some time before moving on to his next adventure with her. His kisses moved from her lips and slowly down her neck and shoulders until she shuddered with anticipation at where she was certain where he was going. When his lips finally found one of her sensitive nipples, her reaction was immediate, her moans increased as he drew one of her engorged nubs into his mouth. She could not believe how much she enjoyed this or how much she wanted him. In her mind she begged him to do the same to her other breast and he almost immediately complied. She loved the sensation! "Please Harry!" she moaned wanting more, begging for him to bring her to release.

She felt her love slowly moving down her body. In her mind she begged for release and shuddered and trembled with each of his soft kisses on her skin. When she had first begged, he released her nipple from his mouth and began his trail of pleasure in the valley between her thoroughly pleased breasts. Inch by inch, he slowly kissed his way down her, past her ribs, across her trembling stomach with a long pause at her belly button, lower and closer to the part of her that ached for him. She then felt him lapping at that part but not plunging in. It was almost more than she could take. "P-p-please," she begged.

She felt him gently part her fold with his soft, warm and wet tongue. He soon found her pleasure bud, the one he had paid such amazingly wonderful attention to earlier with his hands. She nearly lost it when he began to suck and lick it gently. She was no longer able to think, wrapped up in the amazing sensations. "M-m-m-more," she moaned as she was now thrusting into his face and wonderful mouth.

Harry wanted more of her as well. He was not yet totally ready, but he wanted to taste and explore more. He knew what and where and he tried to figure a way to keep his Love going while accomplishing his own desires as well. He slid slightly further down his Love's luscious body and seemingly willed his tongue to explore a new region - her most intimate region.

Hermione moaned as she felt his tongue enter her. She had dreamed of him doing something like this to her, but the dream was far less than the reality. She knew she was not going to last long at all and was soon gasping for breath. Then, something happened that surprised her. It felt as if his tongue was actually growing inside of her, exploring her, finding every place that might drive her wild with pleasure. She wanted to think about this new development, but what he was doing to her was too amazing. Her rational mind was shutting down as the pleasure began to build. It was all she wanted and all she cared about at the moment. "OH GOD," she moaned knowing what would wash over her in seconds. "HARRY!," she gasped as he drove her over the edge into a world of pure pleasure.

It took Hermione several minutes to catch her breath and come back down from what Harry had done to her. Harry had slowly worked his

way back up her body and as her eyes finally opened, she was staring strait into his. She felt his hand running through her curls and could not believe how sensual such a simple act seemed. She smiled at Harry and he smiled back before leaning in for a kiss.

"Did you like that?" he asked when they finally broke apart. Hermione could only nod her head vigorously as she was now very aware of Harry's new arousal pressing against her and was working up the courage to ask him to use it.

"I liked doing that," Harry said. "A lot."

Hermione smiled and then spread her legs wide apart. Her right hand slid off Harry's back and between them searching for him. She soon had him in hand as she stared into his eyes. "Harry?"

"Hmmm?"

"I want to feel you inside of me," she whispered.

Harry's eyes went wide. "What?"

"Make love to me, Harry. Please!" As Harry began to shift around, Hermione guided him towards her entrance. She felt him press against it and begged him to enter. Harry slowly pushed himself in, hoping to savor every second and delighting in the warm, wet and tight place he had just found for himself. He was not all the way in yet when he felt resistance. Hoping that it was not as far as he could go, he was at first rewarded when whatever was stopping him gave way and he found himself all the way into his Hermione. But as it gave way, he heard her hiss and felt her whole body tense up.

He opened his eyes and saw she had turned her head to one side and was biting one of her knuckles. Her eyes were squinted shut and he thought he heard a whimper. "Hermione?" he asked.

"D-don't ... D-don't move," she whispered back.

"Are? Are you okay?"

"H-hurts."

"Perhaps we should stop..."

"Don't - don't move!"

"But..."

"Sup - supposed to, f-first time."

"What is?" He could feel her relaxing slowly.

"It's supposed to hurt the first time," Hermione said, "for girls."

"Oh. I didn't want to hurt you."

"I - I know. Give me a m-moment, please? T-to get used to you?"

Harry nodded and did as he was told. He didn't know how long he lay there enjoying the feeling of being inside of her, gazing into her wonderful eyes and gently stroking her soft hair. He wanted to make love to her, to bring them both to release, but he also wanted her to enjoy it at least as much as he did. This was her first time and he felt she should treasure it as much as he would. He patiently waited for her.

"I'm ready," she finally whispered. "Make love to me, Harry."

"Y-you sure?"

She smiled at him and nodded. As slowly as he could, Harry pulled back and then pushing himself into her again. He prayed she would not find it uncomfortable and was rewarded with a moan of pleasure from his Love. He repeated the process, slowly, as he enjoyed each and every sensation coursing through him and savored her reaction to him.

"You feel sooo good," she moaned, encouraging him.

Harry was not about to disappoint her. He continued his efforts, adjusting slightly each time he sensed a heightened reaction of pleasure from her or from himself. She soon begged him to go faster and he did, thrilled with the now writhing witch beneath him. When he could, he would look at her and enjoy the pleased expression on her face and the look of desire in her eyes, but it was hard to keep his eyes open and, he noticed, it was hard for her as well.

He soon felt the building, the increasing sensation he knew would lead to the end of this. He hoped she was there with him. He did not want her to be left wanting for anything. But, just as he became concerned, he heard the same moans from before, the moans that told him she was where he was at the moment.

"Oh God," she began. "God! S-so g-good... GOD!" She shuddered, gasped and moaned with every movement he made. He knew she was close, but then again so was he. "HARRY!" she called as she seemed to arch her back and get rigid beneath him. He knew she had reached her point of no return and he followed immediately as a wave of immense pleasure washed over him and he spilled himself into her new womanhood. They both collapsed into each others arms, both panting heavily and enjoying the closeness - a closeness neither had ever felt before.

Harry was laying on his back on a couch in the Library with his still very naked Hermione cuddling against him and almost on top of him. He knew she was not really asleep, but she seemed to be dozing a little. After the last time, she had told Harry she needed a little rest before she shagged him senseless again, her words. Harry was trying to figure out how many times that had done it this afternoon. Part of his problem was figuring what counted as "it." Did it count when she made him come the first time by barely touching him? Did it count when she sucked his cock or when he ate her pussy?

He smiled at the thought. "Come," "cock" and "pussy" were apparently words his Hermione preferred over "orgasm" or "ejaculation," "penis" or "vagina." Truth be told, Harry preferred those words too, he just never thought his Hermione would. When Harry had admitted after one of the times that he knew little about the woman's bits, Hermione had told him everything she could. She told

him the proper names for them and what she preferred to call them - all of her preferred names being “dirty words” according to Mrs. Weasley and his Aunt Petunia. She even used her self as a demonstrative aide to her sex lecture that resulted in Harry getting really turned on.

As they lay there, he remembered the other dirty words Hermione now used. He never thought Miss Prim and Proper had such a dirty mouth or mind for that matter. She would beg him not only to make love to her, usually said before they began. When doing it she begged him to fuck her, shag her and make her cum. He never thought she'd say such things. The truth was when she did it turned him on even more.

After their first time, she had begun telling him about her sexual fantasies. They had just caught their breath and she began telling him that she had been playing with herself since the summer before their first year. All of her “successful” fantasies, as in those that really got her to cum hard, were about Harry. She told Harry about her first really mind blowing orgasm and how it had been about him doing that to her. She told him that in one of her favorite fantasies she would play with herself for him and watch him do the same. This had an immediate effect on Harry. He had not pulled his “basilisk” out of Hermione's “Chamber of Secrets” following their first time and her revealing her dirty thoughts had caused him to get aroused inside of her, which she really seemed to enjoy.

Each time they finished, she would tell him more of her dirty Harry fantasies, each time Harry would be ready to shag her within minutes. She told him about her dream of Harry taking her virginity in the Library. They both laughed at the thought, for although this wasn't the Library at Hogwarts, it was indeed a Library. She later told Harry of even more risqué fantasies. She told Harry of a fantasy where she and Harry had sex in front of at least one other woman. She told him of one where she shared Harry with another woman and how turned on she had become dreaming of watching Harry shag another woman while she watched. In these dreams, Harry was hers, she wasn't walking in on Harry but was letting him have his way with the other woman.



To Harry's shock, she admitted that in another one of her more intense Harry sex fantasies, she would have sex with the other woman as well while Harry either watched or participated. To say this revelation did not turn Harry on was an understatement. What really turned him on even more was her saying that, if it could be done, she might actually want all of her fantasies to become a reality and even asked him if there were other girls who he might want to "share" with Hermione.

Harry admitted he had similar fantasies that he "used" when he played with himself. Hermione was always the main woman, but he had dreams of Hermione and others at the same time. He told her a few of them: Katie Bell, who he thought had a hot body; Parvati Patil, who he had taken to the Yule Ball and had dreamed of fucking with Hermione before - he actually admitted in that fantasy it was Hermione and both Patil twins; Ginny Weasley for some reason; a former classmate of theirs who he thought was rather fetching if quiet named Sally-Anne Perks who turned out to have been Hermione's friend; and most recently Luna Lovegood. When Hermione told him that with the possible exception of Ginny, if they were willing she would love to watch, Harry could not help but shag her senseless. She was now his "Horny, kinky little Slut," and she did not seem to mind at all.

She did tell him in no uncertain terms that the thought of shagging another man was not something she would consider even with Harry. Harry didn't mind at all. She was his and his alone, at least as far as men were concerned.

Harry was now trying to figure out just how many times he and his little slut had done it. He knew she enjoyed it every time. She told him so and had begun calling him her "Master" as he was truly the Master at getting her to come. She had also begun announcing this fact when it happened. Her cries of "Oh God!" and "Harry!" from earlier were now coupled with "I'm coming!" so he would know for certain that he had brought her there again and again and again. He still had no idea how many times they had done it. What he did know is she had had far more orgasms than he had, which she liked, and that he always finished when she was coming, which she really, really liked.

Hermione lay atop her Harry, her dream man, and like Harry was also lost in thought. She could not believe how randy this man made her. She was almost mortified about the fantasies she had told him as well as the realization that if they could, she would do them for him. Unlike Harry, she knew exactly how many times they had done it. Counting the hand jobs and oral sex, he had come eight times, she had come eleven. She loved what he could do to her.

As she rested in hopes of more fucks to follow, she was also surprised at how much she liked talking dirty to Harry and hearing him talk dirty to her. She was his “little Slut” now. She knew it and oddly she liked it. She never wanted to ever get dressed again and the thought that she might have to if only for a little while was not something she wanted to think about. All she wanted to do for the rest of her life was shag Harry and have his babies.

That had been one of the more disturbing and then exciting of their post-coital cuddle talks. It was the talk where she taught him about female bits, what they were called, what they were for and how he could pleasure them, not that he really needed any help on the final topic. He was amazing at pleasuring her, better than she had ever dreamed, and in her dreams he was bloody brilliant.

It was during this talk when she mentioned such un-sensual things as a woman’s monthly cycle, something Harry had never known about before. She also told him about the various methods of magical and non-magical birth control and confessed she had neglected to use any of them this day. She was fairly certain it was the wrong time of her month to get pregnant, but those things are not absolutely certain.

To her surprise, Harry was not upset at all. He told her he loved her and meant everything he had said to her recently. He wanted to marry her and he wanted her to carry his babies. As far as he was concerned, they were already married in many ways, just lacking the official piece of paper. Based on his “house” he was fairly certain money would never be an issue for their family. Thus, if she wanted to get pregnant today, next week, next month, next year, every year, that was fine with him. He told her she didn’t even have to ask if she didn’t want to. She made a promise to herself to try and not get pregnant too soon. But, she had to admit if it was not for the fact they

had two years of school left, since he did not mind and wanted her to be the mother of their children she would get pregnant this summer. School was the only thing that would make her wait.

She was almost done resting and hoped Harry would be ready again soon. She wanted to try in on top at least once today. The idea had come to her from a naughty romance novel she had borrowed from her roommate Lavender Brown. She shifted until she was straddling Harry. She was sitting up on him watching him as he opened his eyes and looked at her. She gave him a coy smile and his sleeping basilisk a gentle grind.

"You want more?" Harry asked in near disbelief. This was one horny witch sitting on him. She nodded piously.

"I want to be on top this time," she added.

"You're going to be the death of me, woman," Harry laughed.

"Don't you want to fuck me?"

Harry nodded. "Unfortunately, what I want and what it wants, he said pointing to his groin, "seem to be different things right now."

"I can wake him up," Hermione giggle.

"How?"

"Tell you more about my dirtiest sex fantasy."

"Will that work?"

"You tell me, Lover."

"I thought the one where you let me shag another girl was your dirtiest."

Hermione shook her head. "It's not."

"Dirtier?"

"You might think so."

"What does it involve?"

"You, me and another girl. Luna to be precise."

"Luna?"

Hermione nodded. "Before it was just a generic other girl. Now it's definitely Luna."

"What about Luna?"

"There is a back story to this."

"Really?"

Hermione nodded. "And the back story is true. After we got back to school for Third Year, McGonagall had a meeting with all the girls in our year and House. She met with Lavender, Parvati, Sally-Anne and me. The meeting was about sex and boys, but there was more."

"More?"

"It seems for an adolescent witch, having female orgasms is important for the growth of their magic. While the four of us were told we should probably hold off boy sex until we were a little older, we were told we needed to have orgasms several times a week, ideally two or three times a day. Well, for me that was not a big issue as I have been getting myself off since before I started Hogwarts."

"Really?"

Hermione nodded. "Almost every night before then, two or three times a day since. Anyway, McGonagall told us how we could do it to ourselves, which I already knew. But she also told us it was not uncommon for young witches to have girl sex."

"W-what?"

"It doesn't mean they're lesbians, although there may be some out there, but I'd say at least a third of the girls in school have had girl sex."

"Girl sex?"

"Sex with another girl, silly."

"Erm, how can you have sex with another girl?"

"McGonagall told us. And you know two of the three usual means."

"I do?"

"You did them to me earlier, Love. You used your fingers and then your mouth to get me to come."

"Oh. And the third way?"

"Like this," Hermione said as she ground against Harry again. "Grinding your girl bits against another works too."

"Have you ever?"

"No. I'm still a girl virgin. But I have seen it."

"Really?"

Hermione nodded. "Practically from the day we started Hogwarts."

Harry stared at Hermione, his mouth open.

"The morning after we arrived I went for a shower. The girls shower is all open with lots of showerheads and such. So I go into the shower and there were two Sixth Year girls, naked, kissing and finger fucking each other. I was stunned, but it seemed none of the older girls thought anything of it at all."

"My first break and I went to the girls bathroom and was that a sight! There were three couples - all older students - having girl sex and several other girls rubbing themselves off. There are actually benches in the bathrooms so girls can play with themselves between classes without hogging the toilets for those who actually need to go. I was so confused and wondered if all witches were gay or something because if they were I was in the wrong place.

"That night after dinner I went to find Megan Parker, who was the Fifth Year Prefect with Percy Weasley. I was so confused. She was in her dorm having sex with a Third Year girl. I was stunned. When they finished, I got up the courage to ask what it was about and she told me what McGonagall would later. As soon as a witch enters puberty, she needs to have orgasms. Something to do with the havoc her hormones can have on her magic and the orgasms counteract that.

"As I said, I was already giving myself orgasms. After McGonagall's talk, Sally-Anne began doing the same thing at night as well. Before the talk, I pretty much kept my self-pleasuring secret. After, I really didn't care if any girl knew or not. Same with Sally-Anne. However, there are many young witches who are uncomfortable doing it to themselves and they are encouraged to find a girl who will help them have their orgasms."

"That's just..."

"Harry, it's perfectly acceptable in the Wizarding World. It doesn't mean a witch has to have girl sex, but there is no stigma if they do - unless they do it to the exclusion of men and having babies, then it's a problem. But girl sex for orgasms is acceptable. Heck, why do you think boys aren't allowed in our dorms? Cause we're up there having orgasms!"

"What about Parvati and Lavender."

"When they can't find a boy to shag them, they find a girl."

"They've been having sex with each other?" Harry asked feeling his monster beginning to stir.

“Almost every night at school since our talk with McGonagall. They aren’t shy about it either. And they are not exclusive.”

“What do you mean by exclusive?”

“It means that most of the Girl Sex girls don’t have an exclusive partner. They just fuck whoever is available at the time,” Hermione giggled.

“I had no idea.”

“They don’t do it in the Common Room or anywhere a boy might find them. Lavender and Parvati get their pre-bedtime shag from whomever is available. But in our room after curfew, they have their nightly romp and never seemed to care if Sally-Anne or I was watching. Then again, most years have at least two Girl Sex girls in their dorms.”

“Really?” Harry asked. This was working, he thought.

“Sometimes Sally-Anne and I would do ourselves while watching and Parvati and Lav fucking each other.” Hermione added softly.

“W-what?”

“It was fun.”

“D-did they know you were doing that?”

“Of course. We were usually naked on in our beds next to them when we did.”

“I never would have thought.”

“I also like to do myself in the shower and doing it with a bunch of other girls rubbing themselves off in the girls toilets is fun too. Hearing their moans is a real turn on.”

“Yet you haven’t?”

"I don't need help getting myself to cum, so no. I've been asked, though."

"Really?"

Hermione nodded.

"Let's see. Um - Megan Banks asked me my Third Year. Also, there's Alicia Spinnet, Angelina Johnson, Katie Bell, Leanne Tinker."

"You're kidding! Any other girls I should hear about?"

"Megan Renner and Stacey Jenkins in the year behind us. In fact, the only girl sex girl in Gryffindor, excluding Third Year's who hasn't asked me is Ginny."

"Ginny?"

"Then again, she wasn't one until she made the Quidditch Team."

"C-come again? She wasn't one and then she became one?"

Hermione nodded. "Right after she had the 'Talk' at the beginning of Third Year, she talked to me. She didn't want girl sex but was uncomfortable with the idea of doing it herself too. She got over it once I reminded her how important orgasms were. She refused all sex offers until the day of the try outs to replace you."

"Why then?"

"Seems Angelina wanted solidarity. That meant if she picked a girl to fly, the girl had to be willing to - er - be with her girl teammates sexually. It seems making the team was more important to Ginny than her issues with girl sex. Although, she only has sex with the other Gryffindor girl players."

"D-do you want to have g-girl sex?"

Hermione nodded. "It's supposed to be a real turn on for your man. I didn't want it with just a girl. I want it to share with you."



Harry was now fully aroused.

“And Luna?”

“In my fantasy, she is the one I share with you when I lose my girl virginity.”

“Really?”

Hermione nodded. “I - I think we would go well together in that regard, in fact I know we would. But I’m not about to ask her.”

“What? You know you would but won’t ask her?”

“She never has hinted she was interested in girl sex.”

“But you know you two would go well together?”

Hermione nodded. “Remember the girl’s bathroom? The benches I told you about?”

Harry nodded.

“Well, many girls don’t really play with themselves alone. They get mostly or all naked with their friends as they all do it together. The ones who are not girl sex girls, but have a regular partner or partners for bathroom pleasuring are called Petting Partners. Luna and I have been Petting Partners since the fall of Fourth Year.”

“And what do Petting Partners do?”

“We talk and watch each other as we pleasure ourselves. Luna and I really like watching and doing it together is fun. I’ve been dreaming of doing it for her and her for me for over a year now. In fact, when we are together, that’s usually what I’m thinking about with you of course.”

“And if she wanted to and I wanted to?”

"I would make love to her for you, Harry."

Harry was in shock at this, although it was a real turn on. "I never knew you were so - er - open. You really are a horny little slut."

"Only with you love. And I see it worked."

Harry nodded. Hermione looked down at Harry's return that was quite visible beneath her as she ground into him again, eliciting a gasp from her Love. She absently traced a Rune on his chest she remembered from a class on Runes in Sex Rituals, although she could not remember the ritual in question or what it did. She then raised herself up slightly, carefully adjusting herself so as to guide her favorite basilisk back into its lair. As she slid slowly down his length, she shuddered in anticipation. He was soon all the way in or she was all the way on, depending on one's point of view and she sat there motionless for a moment enjoying the sensation of being filled by him and again absently tracing that Rune on his chest.

He looked up at her helpless. She knew he wanted her to begin and she did, but she took a moment to enjoy the thought of being in control of this situation. As she did, Hermione remembered a passage from one of Lavender's dirty little romance novels she had borrowed the last term for some distraction from the stress of O.W.L. exams. The passage was one where the heroine promised herself to her hero. While most of the book was about sex, and this bit had a fair amount, she liked it and had it memorized. It sounded like a magical oath, but it had to be fake, she thought. Still...

She began slowly rocking back and forth, watching Harry intently as she rode up and down his shaft. She moaned as he felt so wonderful as she moved him inside of her. Harry looked away for a moment as if startled by a noise Hermione had not heard.

He then looked at her in shock. "T-Tonks," he whispered.

"What?" she replied.

"Sh-she's here! She's watching! Perhaps we should..."

"Who cares?" she whispered. "I want you now, not later."

"But..."

"I'm not stopping until we both cum," she replied.

"Y-you d-don't mind?"

"One of my fantasies, remember?"

"Oh yeah. You really are a kinky little slut."

"Only for you," she said picking up her pace. Maybe it was Tonks watching, but she knew she was going to finish sooner rather than later and she could tell from Harry's expressions and his sounds, he would too. She wanted to do the scene from the book. It would not be easy as she was already beginning to gasp for air and control. Between her gasps and moans, she somehow managed to get it out.

"I, Hermione Jean Granger, of my own volition and free will, and from my undying love for thee, offer you, Harry James Potter, myself. I offer you all I have or will have, all I was, am and will ever be in mind, body, heart soul and magic, as friend to friend, lover to lover, wife to husband as your consort, as your partner and companion, your's and your's alone and your's in all things, to fulfill your desires, to stand by your side, to follow you, to bear your children, from this day forward until death shall separate me from you, your House and heirs. Do you accept me, as yours forever, My Love?"

Harry figured she was playing with him a little, but he liked it. This sounded like some sort of magical oath, but not one he ever had heard of before so he figured she made it up for a bit of fun. He never knew she was this playful. He was not about to disappoint her. He knew how to respond and as soon as he could compose himself, which was not easy as she was amazing and he was doing his best not to finish before she came, he managed to say the reply. Fortunately, it was not as long winded as her offer, if that was what that was.

"I, Harry J-J-James P-P-Potter, accept you, Hermione as Consort. S-So m-m-mote it be! Oh GOD!" he moaned as he could not stop the inevitable. Fortunately, he knew he had lasted just long enough.

"I'M COMING," Hermione announced as he let himself loose into her.

Tonks saw what neither of them did. A flash of magic enveloped the two lovers at the height of their pleasure. They glowed gold for several seconds as their mutual pleasure washed over them.

Hermione and Tonks did see a second flash of magic. A green flash sparked from Harry and he screamed in pain grabbing his forehead before passing out. Hermione sat atop him, his spent member still inside, in shock as she saw what looked like black smoke rise from his forehead and another scream filled the room. It was not from Harry or anyone she could see and it faded to nothing as the smoke disappeared. Hermione saw that Harry was still out and got off of him, lying by his side and trying to wake him up.

Unknown to the two witches in shock at the state of things in the Library, at the moment Harry screamed and passed out in locations far from where they were something similar had happened. In a cluttered warehouse filled with centuries of discarded objects, a priceless tiara flashed green, burst into black smoke, emitted a scream and disintegrated. The same fate befell a cup in one of the most secure vaults in Gringotts, the bank of magical Britain, a ring buried beneath the floor of a long abandoned one room shack, a locket hidden beneath a furnace in a house belonging to the Black family in London, and a huge snake that was out looking for a meal.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Hermione Jane Granger, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; with benefits 6/23/96.

## CHAPTER SIX: REVEALING THE TRUTH

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1996. Potter Manor.

"Harry?" Hermione pleaded. "Are you all right?"

Harry's eyes opened. "Wow! That was amazing," he sighed looking into Hermione's eyes. To his surprise, he thought he saw fear. "H-Hermione?"

"What's wrong, Harry? Are you okay?"

"Nothing's wrong. I just had the most mind blowing sex with the most wonderful woman on the face of the planet. What could possibly be wrong?" He hoped Hermione would smile at that as she looked worried. Her expression did not change.

"I thought I hurt you," she said almost with a whimper.

"I feel fine. Honestly! In fact, I'm not sure I remember feeling this good." He saw she still looked far too concerned. "Why? Did something happen?"

Hermione nodded.

"W-what?"

"You don't remember?"

"We had just cum. I remember that. I closed my eyes for a bit, and then your asking if something's wrong."

"You don't remember then."

"Remember what?"

"Just after - just after we both came, there was a flash of magic from you. You screamed in pain and grabbed your forehead. It must have been your scar, Harry. A black smoke or something came off of you.

There was another scream. It wasn't you or me or Tonks. It didn't even sound human. Then you passed out."

"I passed out?" Harry asked in disbelief.

Hermione nodded.

"H-how long?"

"Not long," Tonks said. "Twenty seconds. What ever happed must not have been too bad as a simple Ennervate brought you around immediately."

"But his scar," Hermione said.

"What about it?" Harry and Tonks asked.

"It's gone."

"What?" Harry cried. "But that's impossible. Not even a glamour charm can hide it!"

"Never the less, it's gone."

"Voldemort," Harry said.

"What about him?"

"I - I can't feel him anymore! M-maybe he snuffed it?"

"I doubt we're that lucky," Tonks said.

"Any ideas what happened just now?" Hermione asked Tonks.

"Not a clue," Tonks sadly admitted. "But if Harry's feeling alright, I think it is safe to worry about the what later."

"But," Hermione began to complain.

"It seems you two have had a very interesting afternoon," Tonks said broaching no argument as the two teens blushed, remembering they were still very naked and had just made love in front of Tonks. "Now put your clothes on so we can have some supper."

"Supper?" Harry asked.

"It's after seven," Tonks added.

The two teens realized they had been doing it for over six hours. They got up and did as they were asked.

The three of them finished their dinner and retired to a couple of couches in the Great Room of the Private Apartments. Tonks had promised them at dinner that she would begin telling them everything she knew about what really was going on. Tonks looked intently at Hermione to begin with.

"Hermione," she asked, "did Harry show you his notebook?"

"At lunch," Hermione nodded.

"Anything else?"

"He told me his father's parents were still alive when his parents died."

Tonks nodded. "By law, unless the Last Will and Testament of James Charles Potter said otherwise, Harry should have come here to live after his parents died," Tonks said. "Even if it did say otherwise, because Harry is heir to the Potter estate, he should have spent much of his childhood here. And his Muggle relations could have done nothing to stop either his being sent here to live or to visit."

"Then why was he with the Dursleys?"

"We'll get to that. So have you reached any conclusions based upon the notebook and things?"

"Not - not really. There's still more questions than answers."

“Do you have a working theory, Hermione?”

Hermione nodded.

“And?” Tonks asked.

“Dumbledore is setting Harry up for something and whatever it is, it won't be good for Harry.”

“Very good, although in truth that's an understatement.”

“What do you mean?” Harry asked.

“Harry, you have at least two mortal enemies. The obvious one is - erm - V-v-v-voldem-mort. Damn! I actually said his name! Anyway, he's obvious. He's been trying to kill you since you were born and he is hardly subtle about it. V-voldemort is an in your face kind of bastard. You always can see him coming, so to speak, and he doesn't care. As dangerous as he is, however, he pales when compared to Harry's other mortal enemy.”

“Dumbledore?” Hermione asked.

Tonks nodded. “Dumbledore is manipulative, devious as all hell and prefers to be subtle and lurk in the shadows. Unlike V-voldemort, Dumbledore's enemies are led to believe he is their friend and ally. They never see the knife that kills them and Dumbledore is extremely good at covering his tracks so that all evidence points somewhere else. As far as we know, he might have killed a couple of people himself. But he has caused the deaths of scores or more, all the while being the most revered wizard in our society.”

“Why? Why would he do that?”

“Same reason as Voldie, to be honest. Like Voldie, he is a Pureblood Supremacist who believes the wizarding world should rule all and Purebloods should rule the wizarding world. He calls this ‘The Greater Good,’ but is very adept at hiding his true purpose from most of the world. Unlike Voldie, Dumbledore really is a Halfblood, but



keeps that under his hat, and already controls the Wizengamot, Hogwarts and the International Confederation of Wizards. Although he has refused to become Minister for Magic many times, he controls that post as well."

"But all the stuff Fudge said and did," Harry countered, "all the stuff in the Prophet this past year."

"Do you really think that just happened? I can tell you it was all part of Dumbledore's scheme, and he has many."

"And Umbridge?"

"She could never have set foot in Hogsmeade much less Hogwarts without Dumbledore's approval."

"And the Dementor attack on me and my cousin?"

"Ah yes. That was all Umbridge. But the bitch is back at her post within the Ministry. Dumbledore tacitly approved the attack."

"WHAT? WHY?" Harry and Hermione both exclaimed.

"Did Dumbledore tell you about the Prophecy, Harry?" Tonks asked.

Harry nodded.

"Have you told Hermione?"

Harry shook his head. "Was going to, but have not."

"Tell her."

Harry did as he was told. Hermione gasped and Harry could tell she was now silently crying. He pulled her into a hug.

"Did he tell you what it meant?"

"It means only I can kill the bastard," Harry said. "It also implies I'll win, but not survive."

“That is the meaning Dumbledore wants you to believe, Harry. It is the meaning he wanted us to believe. He told us about the Prophecy the day before the Battle at the Ministry.”

“Why then? Why not sooner?”

“I believe it was because he could not trust Sirius when it came to you. I believe he suspected that anything he said about you got back to Sirius somehow and therefore kept his real plans as close to the vest for as long as he could. Dumbledore held an Order meeting at the Weasleys to discuss your - er - future or lack thereof. Naturally, Sirius was stuck in Grimmauld Place and could not attend. Whenever Dumbledore needed to get help from the Order regarding his real plans for you, he cut Sirius out of the loop, since he knew Sirius would not support him.”

“Why?”

“You’ve been screwed, Harry. Ever since that night in May of 1980 when that old bat Trelawney made that Prophecy, you’ve been screwed.”

“Yeah, well having that nut job Voldemort after you tends to do that.”

“Voldemort is dangerous, Harry. This is true. Yet you’ve fought him more than any man alive and always to at least a draw. It won’t take a lot of training for you to be able to defeat him with relative ease.”

“Then why haven’t I been getting any training?”

“Only two people have stood toe to toe with the bastard and lived, Harry: you and Dumbledore. You are at least as powerful as Voldie, probably much more powerful. The reason you haven’t beaten him is what he lacks in power he makes up for in experience. But he’s an arrogant ass. With a little training, your power and his arrogance will be his undoing.”

“And yet why no training?” Harry asked again.

"Dumbledore told you the Prophecy meant Voldemort, right?"

Harry nodded.

Tonks shook her head. "That's just what he wants you to think. You grew up in the Muggle world. You have never learned the nuances of magical society including that certain words and phrases mean something different in the magical world, especially when spoken by a pureblood to a wizard from an ancient line."

"I don't understand," Harry and Hermione said in unison.

"What's Voldemort's real name?"

"Tom Marvolo Riddle," Harry said.

Tonks nodded. "Not a pureblood name is it?"

"Don't think so."

"It's not," Hermione said. "In Nature's Nobility: A Wizarding Genealogy it lists all the Pureblood and Aristocratic Wizarding families as of the date of publication. The copy I saw was from 1961, well after Riddle was born and the name Riddle does not exist."

"Riddle is, as you should know, half blood," Tonks continued. "His mother was named Marope Gaunt, a pureblood witch of at best borderline ability from a family at the bottom of society that had been inbreeding for goodness knows how many generations. His father was a Muggle. He was neither of Pureblood nor noble birth. And, like you two, he was raised in the Muggle world, ignorant of ours and our culture."

"And this matters because?" Harry began.

"Trelawney is a Pureblood and like most people believes Dumbledore is as well. She made her prophecy as a Pureblood to a Pureblood. The Prophecy refers to the One who can defeat a Dark Lord, correct?"

Harry nodded.

"In Pureblood parlance, Lord has a very specific meaning. It does not mean Voldemort at all. It cannot. Voldemort is not a Lord under Wizarding Law. He is not the head of a Noble House. Thus, the Dark Lord referred to in the Prophecy is not Voldemort."

"Then why is he after me?"

"Because he does not know that. His asinine followers tagged him with that Dark Lord nonsense believing he was the Pureblood heir of Slytherin. But the Ancient and Noble House of Slytherin has not existed in seven hundred years. Despite his nickname, he is not nor can he be a Lord. The Dark Lord must be the head of a Noble House, Harry."

"Then why does everyone think otherwise?"

"There is no doubt that Voldemort is more powerful than most, Harry. But there are two wizards more powerful than him. One is Albus Dumbledore. The other is you. And of the two, you are potentially the most powerful."

"Potentially?"

"I'm an Auror, Harry. One of the spells I can do is one that can measure the strength and signature of a person's magical core. It is a silent spell. The target cannot detect it as it causes no effect, feeling or harm. Healers know it as well. The strength is measured as a number on the Ganter Magical Scale. Magical strength of creature, being or wizard is expressed as a number between 1 and 1000. Most witches and wizards are between 150 and 350. These scores are part of your school records. Riddle was a 505, well above the norm. Dumbledore is a 535. Hermione here is 490. You, on the other hand are a conundrum."

"How so?"

"Your score is 478. Not bad at all, really. The problem is your magical core is bound."

“What’s that mean?”

“There is a spell that is cast on ‘problem children,’ those being children who display excessive and dangerous outbursts of accidental magic. It binds the magical core, traps the energy inside and allows it to dissipate slowly over time rather than in a single outburst. It supposed to be done by a fully qualified Healer, and all such bindings must be recorded and the child monitored by a Healer. By law, the core must be unbound by the time the child starts a magical school. Your’s is still bound. It’s been bound since you were between five and eight years old. There is no record of it or any indication you ever saw a Healer. And Madam Pomphrey, as talented as she is, does not count as seeing a Healer. About fifty percent of your magical power is contained.”

“Fifty percent?”

“Your true Ganter Score should be around 930 Harry. Someone bound your core without authority and you’ve been operating at about half power this whole time. You fight Death Eaters and Voldemort to a stand still, drive off a hundred Dementors with a simple Patronus Charm, and you’re doing it with little training and one hand tied behind your back! If we remove the binding, your stunner will probably be almost as lethal at full power as the Killing Curse itself.”

“So I was bound because I was too powerful?”

“Yes and no. Yes, you are quite powerful, but that’s what training is for; to teach you how to control your power. No, you were bound to make you easier to kill. The reason you survived the Killing Curse is not because of some mythical sacrifice by your Mum. You were too powerful for that spell - PERIOD. With the binding in place, it can kill you.”

“Shit! That means while Voldemort is trying to kill me, someone else is trying to make it so he can kill me!”

Tonks nodded.

“Who?”

“The Dark Lord in the Prophecy, Harry. The one who heard the whole thing. The one who wants you to believe that Voldemort is your only enemy. The one who is the Head of a Pureblood, Noble House.”

“Dumbledore?”

Tonks nodded.

“But he’s the leader of the Light,” Hermione protested.

“Indeed,” Tonks said. “Have you ever read the Bible, Hermione?”

She nodded.

“The Book of Revelations perhaps?”

“It was not part of the catechism, but you know me and books.”

“How was the Antichrist described at first?”

“A hero. A savior. A man who could sit at all tables. A man the people thought was...”

“A leader of the Light, perhaps?”

“Surely we aren’t talking about that Prophecy?”

“I certainly hope not, but the literary and historical truth in Revelations is relevant. The most dangerous evil is that which sneaks up on everyone. The wolf in sheep’s clothing, if you will. Voldemort is feared, but he’s also in the open. Yes, he has followers, but he can only command by force. He trusts no one and rules his world by fear alone.

“Far more dangerous is the evil man who appears benign, helpful, and good. He smiles in your face and strokes your ego. He appears as friend to all and pushes agendas that he does not believe in but

that will gain him support. Only when he controls all will he show his true colors and by then it's too late.

"He promotes laws favorable to those who have suffered in the past and Muggle Borns and Muggles in particular. Yet, as Head of the Wizengamot, he controls who will serve as Minister for Magic and what cases go to trial. The laws are on the books and praised by those who believe in them, but it is the rare individual who is ever prosecuted for breaking those laws. The Wizengamot looks the other way while the corrupt Pureblood Elitists in the Ministry accept bribes to drop charges. Dolores Umbridge is evil enough to give Voldie a run for his money. Were she not a Pureblood, albeit from a lower class, non-noble House, she would be rotting in Azkaban, yet she's back at her old job.

"Dumbledore and Voldemort differ in their tactics and methods to gain and hold power. Otherwise, they are similar. They both believe and want a caste society. Purebloods will rule the world. Muggles will be at the bottom and the rest of us based upon magic and blood status will live somewhere in between. I can tell you, most of us do not believe this nonsense. Voldie succeeds because he is ruthless and has ruthless followers. Dumbledore succeeds because he is invisible.

"For years, Voldie was Dumbledore's chief rival for power. Dumbledore had the true edge. He was appointed Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot in 1946 and thus controls the legislature and the courts. He's been asked to become Minister more times than anyone should. He's refused since he's figured out he can control the bastards. He's been headmaster of Hogwarts since 1953, and thereby controls education and what young people learn and believe because if it is not taught at Hogwarts, it is believed that it is not worth teaching. He's head of the International Confederation of Wizards. He all but owns the Daily Prophet. The only part of our world he does not control is Gringotts.

"Dumbledore's real hold on power, however, is the Order of the Phoenix. It was not formed to fight Voldemort. It was formed as a Pureblood secret society around 1920 to promote and push forward the Pureblood Greater Good. During the first War with Voldie and since his return, it has added its combat arm, one that admits any

witch or wizard opposed to Voldie. But the Pureblood core has never stopped.

“Sirius Black joined to fight Voldie. He was, however, a legacy. His father, Grandfather and Great-grandfather were all Order members. His younger brother joined the Death Eaters after joining the Order to act as an agent for the Order. Two others that we know of also became Death Eaters on Dumbledore’s orders - Severus Snape and Peter Pettigrew. Both were sent in either as spies or agents.

“Severus was and is a double agent. He spies on Voldie and his followers and reports to Voldie about the Order. He gives Voldie just enough useful information to maintain his cover.

“Sirius’s younger brother was sent in as an agent to discover what Voldie was on about. Voldie had claimed he had defeated Death or some such and Dumbledore needed to know what that meant. Regulus Black died in the attempt, although we do not yet know how.

“Peter Pettigrew was sent in after he became Secret Keeper for your parents. Stroke of luck it was for Dumbledore that Sirius had that brilliant plan. Sirius was not about to go over. Pettigrew would.”

“Why would Dumbledore do that?” Hermione asked.

“When Dumbledore heard the Prophecy, he suspected what it meant. A boy would be born who could put an end once and for all to his dream of Pureblood Supremacy. Two boys fit that description: Neville Longbottom, a Pureblood whose family privately could care less about the Pureblood agenda but publicly appear to be supporters; and Harry Potter, a half blood from an Ancient and Noble House that had historically despised Pureblood culture. The enemy had to be the Half-Blood.

“Since that date, Harry Potter must die in Dumbledore’s eyes. What better way than for it to be at the hands of Voldemort or his follower or someone else. Had Harry been raised here, no one could have gotten to him. Instead, his mother was convinced that Dumbledore’s house in Godric’s Hollow was safer. It was not as we know. Peter



Pettigrew was sent into the Death Eaters to give Harry up on a silver platter.

“Obviously, that failed. Dumbledore believed then that it was because of his mother’s sacrifice. Truth is, it was because he was too powerful to be killed by that curse, but Dumbledore did not know it.

“Plan two: he sends Harry to the Dursleys. He knew what they were like and hoped they’d kill him either by their beatings or starvation or whatever. Harry’s magic saved him time and again, which is why we believe Dumbledore bound his core. But as he to this day has no idea just how powerful Harry is, the binding was not enough.

“Plan three: keep Harry in the dark. We think Ron Weasley befriended Harry on his mother’s orders. We know she is an inner core, Pureblood Order member and has been for a long time. We think Ron was supposed to ensure that Harry would follow in his footsteps academically and become a serious underachiever. At some point, the plan was that the Prophecy would be revealed, yet Harry would not receive the training he would need and in the end would be killed.

“In the meantime, each year presented an opportunity for his untimely demise. First year, you can bet Dumbledore knew Quirrell was possessed by Voldemort and seeking the Philosophers Stone. It should never have been taken out of its vault in Gringotts. The traps to ‘protect’ the stone were set up so that Harry and his friends could get through most all of them. Dumbledore hoped Quirrell would get lucky and kill Harry and that he would still fail to get the stone, but Harry killed Quirrell instead.

“Second year, Dumbledore knew as soon as the Chamber opened what was up. He did not know Ginny Weasley was the one. Didn’t care either. He knew Harry was going after whatever it was and he knew the monster was a basilisk. He figured Harry’s chance of seeing the summer were non-existent. Yet Harry killed the beast.

“Third year, Dumbledore allowed the Dementors into the area to ‘protect’ Harry from his Godfather. Truth is, Dumbledore knew all along Sirius was innocent. Sirius was sent to Azkaban without trial.

True, there was a law in effect at the time that allowed that - but only for a marked Death Eater and Sirius did not have the mark. Without the mark, Sirius was entitled by law to a trial, one which would have seen him acquitted, but Dumbledore's long term plan for Harry's death could not work if Sirius remained in the picture. So he was sent to prison.

"When he escaped, Dumbledore used Dementors. In part, he hoped they might stumble on Sirius and kill him. In reality though, he was hoping they'd finish off Harry. The Dementors attacked the train to do just that and might have succeeded had not Harry chosen to sit in the same compartment as Remus, a family friend. They tried him again at a Quidditch match, but..."

"Wait," Hermione interrupted, "but Dumbledore saved him! He fell off his broom and surely would have died!"

"Harry's fall was well within Dumbledore's power to prevent," Tonks said. "Many knew that. Had he done nothing, it would have looked suspicious. It most certainly would not be subtle."

"The final dementor attack that year was on Dumbledore's orders. Somehow, Harry survived. That was why he suggested you two go back in time. He knew Harry would try and save everyone and everything and was certain the Dementors would get him given a second chance, and Sirius as well. He was livid when he failed twice."

"Fourth year. If you think for one moment that he did not know that the man you then knew as Professor Moody was an imposter and a Death Eater, you're fooling yourself. Barty Crouch, Jr. was an open book to Dumbledore. Years in Azkaban can do that to you. The real Moody has not trusted Dumbledore since."

"Did Dumbledore know what Crouch was up to? No. He did know that Harry's entrance into the Tri-Wizard was probably a murder plot. Harry was expected to die. He did not. But, the guilt Harry felt over the death of Diggory set a new plan in motion."

"The plan had always been that Harry would be groomed to die the Martyr's death. When the time came, he would march to his death at

the hands of either Voldie or his minions. He would do so willingly and his whole life from the moment his parents died had been orchestrated to achieve that end goal. The return of Sirius Black posed a major road bump on that path.”

“Why?” Harry asked.

“Your grandfather Charles Potter never trusted Dumbledore. When your Great-grandfather Charlus died in ‘78, Charles became Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter. In ‘76, Sirius had a falling out with his mother Walburga. His father, Orion Black, could barely stand the woman, but agreed to name Sirius’s younger brother as heir to the Black estate. Sirius moved in with your father’s family here on the estate.

“In ‘79, Regulus was killed. The Blacks knew this since his death was witnessed by their House Elf. Without telling his wife, Orion reinstated Sirius. Sirius again became the heir of the Ancient and Noble House of Black.

“When Dumbledore insisted that James and Lily move to his home in Godrics Hollow in June of ‘80 following the Prophecy, Charles was livid. The Dumbledore property was barely protected and even the promised Fidelius Charm could be compromised. The Potter estate, by contrast, is as impregnable as magic can allow. It is safer than Hogwarts or Gringotts for that matter. Your parents could have raised you to adulthood here without fear of Death Eaters or Voldie.

“Your Mum was the problem. Your father was indifferent about the whole thing. Your Mum trusted Dumbledore. It was she who agreed to move to Godrics Hollow. Charles objected most vehemently. Sirius objected as well. Here, there would be no need for a Secret Keeper and he knew he was the Potters’ first choice. Dumbledore suggested Pettigrew and to use Sirius as a decoy and Sirius relented. It was a couple of months before your parents death when Pettigrew raised suspicion. Sirius, as heir to an Ancient and Noble House and Charles as head of one confronted Dumbledore and demanded in no uncertain terms that you and your parents return to Potter Manor.

“As you can suppose, Dumbledore ignored the request. Sirius then threatened to invoke his rights of Guardianship should anything happen to your parents.”

“Guardianship?” Harry asked.

“Every magical child has a magical guardian,” Tonks began. “It is always a wizard. Obviously, if the father is a wizard, he is the child’s magical guardian. If the father is not a wizard, it would have to be someone else. Until the child becomes a legal adult, the magical guardian acts as their magical parent. The Guardian decides all things with respect to that child: where it will live, whether it will attend school before Hogwarts, whether it will have an allowance and if so how much, what kind of medical treatment the child will receive. Basically, everything a parent does. Particularly in Pureblood or aristocratic families, the magical guardian can also arrange a marriage for the child.

“The wizard father can designate a magical guardian for his children in his Will in the event of his death. But while the designation is usually upheld, it can be challenged by those who have a right to the position by law. That includes: the paternal grandfather of the child, the godfather of the child and, if the child is deemed a member of an Ancient and Noble House, the Head of House or heir apparent if said heir is of age. The challenge to a Will would be determined by the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot.”

“Dumbledore,” Harry hissed.

“Indeed. Under your father’s Will, Sirius was to be your magical guardian. Your grandfather had no problem with that and felt it was best because Sirius was supposedly in with Dumbledore while he was in fact not. He knew how far a challenge would go as to your guardianship if he raised it based upon his status as Grandfather or even Head of House. He was persona non grata with Dumbledore and then Ministry as he opposed them on many issues in the Wizengamot and was less than tactful about it. His challenge would be in the dustbin by morning.

“Sirius, though, was another matter. Sirius did not trust the bastard either. He was named in the Will as your Guardian and had common law claim to you as both your Godfather and heir apparent as one of your Heads of House.”

“Wait a tic,” Hermione interjected. “How was Sirius Harry’s Head of House when his Granddad was Head of the House of Potter?”

“Harry was Sirius’s second cousin once removed. They had a common ancestor who was Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black: Phineas Nigelus Black, a former Headmaster of Hogwarts. Phineas was Harry’s Great-great-great Grandfather - and mine as well - and Sirius’s Great-great Grandfather. James Potter and Sirius were second cousins. As such, Harry is part of the Clan Black and Sirius was ultimately Head of House or Clan. True, while he was alive, Charles Potter was Harry’s true Head of House. But upon his death and until Harry came into his full inheritance, Sirius became his Head of House.

“Under all three laws, Sirius claim of guardianship was superior to Dumbledore’s. The only reason Dumbledore could even act as your guardian was due to Sirius’s sojourn in Azkaban. He really could not perform his duties from there. Still, once Sirius escaped, he had the right and power to become your guardian.”

“But he was on the run,” Harry noted.

“He was never convicted of a crime. There were no charges pending against him. By law and magic, he became your guardian early in your Third Year and there was nothing Dumbledore could do about it. This was a set back to Dumbledore’s Master Plan, but one he could live with at the time as he did not think Sirius would do anything rash. This was why he took the calculated risk of letting you try to rescue Sirius from certain execution.”

“Master Plan?”

“Greater Good, Harry. Dumbledore’s plan is complex and involved and filled with contingencies, but they all lead to the same result: Dumbledore as unquestioned supreme leader of the entire Wizarding

World. Emperor Albus the First. He was close to gaining near total control of Britain when Voldie came onto the scene as a direct competitor. With the Prophecy, he believed that his real enemy was you and that provided him with a masterful plan.

"You see, his plan for you is simple. You are supposed to die fighting Voldemort."

"I figured out that bit."

"Whether you succeed or not is of no moment for if you fail, Dumbledore will off the bastard. Either way, the Great Harry Potter will be dead and his mentor will reap the glory, paving his way to full control of the government. However, while he has been politically the most powerful wizard in Britain for ages, political power without the financial wherewithal to back it up is not worth much. He needs money and lots of it. As Lord Dumbledore, head of a Noble House, he has credentials, but his House lost its wealth centuries ago.

"The Noble and Ancient House of Potter, on the other hand, that is one of the if not the wealthiest House in all Britain. With the full financial backing of those resources, Dumbledore would be unstoppable. He had been denied backing from the two previous Heads: Charlus and Charles. He thought he had an in with your father, until the prophecy was made and it was clear that your family had to die. When you survived, there was his third option: the surviving heir Harry Potter."

"You mean in addition to wanting me dead he also wants to steal my family's money?"

Tonks nodded.

"That bastard! How? How can he do this?"

"His original plan was temporarily thwarted when Sirius resumed his duties. His plan was two fold: first, as your magical guardian, should you die before you turn seventeen and die without issue - as in a child - he takes control of the Potter Estate as there are no other heirs. He had hoped you would snuff it before now. However, he had a

backup plan in the event you lived longer than anticipated. This summer, he was going to execute a marriage contract between you and Ginerva Weasley.”

“WHAT?” the two teens cried in unison.

Tonks nodded. “That was before Sirius. If you were still alive after your fifth year, you would marry Ginny later this summer. She would become a baby factory, pumping out Potter sprogs until she gave birth to a son.”

“Why Ginny?” Harry asked.

“Her Mum. Molly Weasley is one of Dumbledore’s most fervent followers, remember? She’s been inner circle Order since she turned seventeen and is from a family that have been in the Order and supported the Old Man Greater Good since the beginning. When your parents died, the Old Man told Molly of his plan and she had Arthur offer you a marriage contract. One of many, I’m sure, but as your guardian, the Old Man had the power to accept or reject contracts on your behalf until you came of age. Sirius ruined that.

“With Sirius as your guardian, Ginny could not become your wife and baby factory by contract. She had to get you herself and, while she had been groomed practically from birth to be your bride, she’s a teenager and gave into teenage impulses allowing you to - er - look elsewhere. She also proved somewhat shy about you. She was supposed to get you to take her to the Yule Ball.”

“She went with Neville,” Harry observed.

“And Neville asked her within days of the announcement while you waited weeks to ask anyone. She then began dating others. So long as Sirius remained your guardian, she was out of the picture. Hence, this past year.”

“What about this past year?”

“Well, ever since Sirius reclaimed guardianship over you, with the exception of the night Peter Pettigrew was uncovered, he has been

keeping a low profile. Dumbledore had hoped that the rash and reckless Sirius was still there. Instead, Sirius was more mature and did not rush in without a damn good reason. the Old Man hoped he would get caught and thrown back into Azkaban or get killed. It didn't happen."

"Why didn't Dumbledore just expose him?" Hermione asked.

"He does not work that way. That is an overt attack on someone many considered a loyal member of the Pureblood inner circle. the Old Man is into stealth and subtlety, not in your face tactics, remember?"

"We knew that Voldie was looking for the Prophecy since the middle of the summer thanks to Snape. We knew he finally learned that only Harry or he could retrieve it by mid Autumn. Voldie was not about to do it himself and was at a loss as to how to get Harry to do it for him right up until just before Christmas when Harry saw the attack on Arthur Weasley. Voldie now knew it was possible to enter and maybe control Harry's mind. Just after Christmas, this news was reported to the Old Man by Snape. Voldie knew nothing about Harry's relationship with Sirius then. His plan was to wait until summer and then convince Harry that one of his friends, probably Hermione, was in the Department of Mysteries.

"Dumbledore saw a chance to get to Sirius. First, Snape reported to Voldie that there was someone who was not in Hogwarts whom Harry would probably play hero to save - Sirius. the Old Man also told Snape to give you Occlumency lessons."

"Those didn't go well," Harry grumped.

"That depends."

"On what?"

"On what Snape was actually told to teach you. He wasn't teaching Occulmency."

"What?"



“Prior to the beginning of the next term, all books on the subject were removed from the school. the Old Man knew that ‘the brightest witch of her age’ would make a bee line for them and would learn real quick you were not being taught Occlumency at all. Occlumency, as you know, is a mind art that shields the mind from magical intrusion. Snape was teaching you its opposite, Oriency, which is the art studied by seers and such to open their minds. He was basically making it easier for Voldie to get to you.”

“I fucking thought so!”

“The plan was simple by Dumbledore standards. Voldie would send you an image of Sirius being tortured, you’d go charging to the rescue and maybe get yourself killed. If not, Sirius would not sit still and do nothing. Sirius would insist on joining the Harry rescue and if the Death Eaters didn’t kill him, the Old Man would and make it look like Sirius step in the way of a curse meant for someone else. The execution proved highly problematic.”

“How so?”

“Both the Old Man and Voldie figured that once you got the image, you’d be off. They figured you’d head to Hogsmeade or a nearby Floo and Floo to the Ministry. They figured you’d be alone. Except, you didn’t Floo in. You flew in on Thestrals. You tried to check and see if the image was real or not. You did not go alone.

“From the time that you got Voldie’s image until you finally arrived at the Ministry, over seven hours elapsed. Had the attack been real, Sirius would have been dead for hours. We knew you were coming by a slow method and told the Old Man that we should send a party to cover the entrances to the Ministry. He shot it down saying that Harry probably was not really on a rescue mission, rather wanted to be there when the dire news broke. When we learned you actually were heading into the Ministry, the Old Man prevented us from launching a rescue for forty-five minutes. By then, four of your friends were down and you and Neville were fighting for your lives.

"It was the worst possible scenario for us, jumping into a pitched battle without any recon or intelligence. It was bound to get someone killed. An unlucky break, it happened to be Sirius." Tonks wiped a tear from her eye.

"Harry, I know you probably blame yourself for what happened. Don't. Sirius was set up by Dumbledore. Everything that happened to you since Christmas was set up to expose Sirius and get him killed. He suspected that possibility, but went anyway hoping he was wrong. But he went in prepared for the worst to happen to him."

"Why didn't anyone tell me?"

"Dumbledore and Snape are both masters of Legillimency. Snape was practically mind raping you once a week for months. Had we told you anything, Dumbledore would have known and would have made it impossible for us to help you."

"Who's we?"

"We called ourselves alternately 'The Dumbledown League' and the 'Harry Potter Fan Club.' We are opposed to the Old Man and are dedicated to defeating his 'Greater Good.' Once we learned you place in that plan, we decided to figure out a way to remove you from the Old Man's equation. Sirius was our leader. Most of us are in the Order and have been sharing information regarding the Old Man and you for years. We also have spies in the Ministry, myself being one. Anything on you or the Old Man or that poses a threat to us, we report. In addition to Sirius and me, there's Remus, Bill Weasley and his fiancé Fleur, Professor McGonagall, Arabella Figg, Amelia Bones, Alastor Moody and Kingsley Shacklebolt. We are all accomplished Occlumens so the Old Man and his snake haven't spotted us yet. We all are in this for different reasons, but we all are in this to end the Old Man. Voldie too, for that matter. But the Old Man is the more dangerous of the two.

"Remus, Sirius, Amelia and Bill are Purebloods whom the Old Man believe are fanatic supporters of the Order's true agenda - Pureblood rule. Sirius, Remus, Arabella and Bill and Fleur are considered too close to Harry for the Harry Potter agenda. But anything we learn is

reported to everyone. Over the past two years, we have learned what is really going on and we realized it needs to stop. Our plan was and is to deny the Old Man his prize pawn - Harry Potter. Even if Sirius had not passed, you would have been removed here today. And - you would have received this:" Tonks handed Harry a parchment.

I, Sirius Orion Black, by the Will of my father, Lord Orion Signus Black the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, by the Will of my friend James Charles Potter, then Heir to the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, by right as Godfather and as Head of the House of Black, being Magical and Legal Guardian of my Ward and Designated Heir, Harry James Potter, do hereby this day find that my Ward has shown the Courage, Honor, Integrity, and Maturity beyond that of any and has shown that he is ready to assume the rights and responsibilities of an adult and the right to come into his inheritance and to assume the Mantle as the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter.

As such, by the powers vested in me at law and by magic as his Guardian, I hereby declare my Ward, Harry James Potter, fully emancipated from all bonds, oaths, contracts, and laws applicable to and binding upon a minor wizard and do hereby declare him an adult from this day forward and for all time.

Signed and Sworn this 24th Day of May, 1996 under my Seal as Head of House,

Lord Sirius Orion Black

Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, former Guardian of Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter pursuant to the provision of the Last Will and Testament of Lord Charles David Potter as duly recorded with the Ministry of Magic, Wizengamot and Goblins of Gringotts Bank as effective on November 1st, 1988.

We, the undersigned, do attest, that the above named executor is of sound mind, that he executes this document of his own free will and is not under duress or compulsion magical or otherwise and that this is his free and voluntary act.

Ragnok - Chief and Director of Gringotts

Tarbaka - Senior Accounts Manager and Potter Estate Trustess

Griphook - Junior Accounts Manager

Above document duly filed and recorded and made effective:

Julie Preston, Recorder of Law, Ministry of Magic: 30 May 1996

Horace Slesterson, Clerk of Records Wizengamot: 4 June 1996

Karaspash: Recorder of Deeds and Records, Gringotts: 28 May 1996

"Erm," Harry began, "just what does this mean?"

"Step one in our plan to give you your life back, Milord Potter," Tonks said. "You are now legally an adult and Dumbledore can piss off regarding his plans for you. He can no longer - ever - access or take control of your estate and any plans he has with regards to your romantic life," Tonks smiled at Harry and Hermione both, "are now rubbish. Moreover, as an adult and a Head of an Ancient and Noble House, you now outrank him. True, he is more powerful. But our laws are hierarchical. You have more rights than he does and he knows it.

"Moreover, your House alone controls votes in the Wizengamot, votes formerly held in proxy by the Old Man. He just lost those. You're aligned with Houses Longbottom and Bones. You will also become Lord Black, with the Black votes and its allies. That will give you direct control over a significant number of votes. Not a majority, but you may be close. the Old Man never truly enjoyed complete control of a majority. With some help, you may be able to get a majority and, should the Old Man piss you off, you can remove him from his position as Chief Warlock and appoint his successor. Ditto the Minister for Magic."

"The bastard already has," Harry grumbled.

“For now, it would be best to assign a proxy of your own. Madam Bones or Longbottom are fair bets. You will receive copies of proposed legislation and such, but they are fair minded. You cannot truly take your seat until you turn seventeen, despite being emancipated. I would suggest, Milord, you stay out of the political limelight for now, unless you are under direct threat from the Old Man and / or the Ministry. That’s when your Potter-Black votes should be used.”

“I’ll keep that in mind. Now, I suppose I am here for a reason?”

“Indeed. While you are now an adult, the Old Man cannot be trusted not to try and meddle. Here, he cannot get to you. It’s your call, Milord Potter, but our plan was to keep you safe and provide you with training you will need both in combat and war and peace, politics and business so that the Pureblood threats can be dealt with and you can have the life you want and not what others want for you.”

Harry drifted into thought. To be honest, he’d rather be the horny teenager shagging his girl than have to deal with all of this.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Hermione Jane Granger, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; with benefits 6/23/96.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: OF WILLS AND LIES

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1996. Potter Manor.

“Okay, I guess we know why Harry is here,” Hermione said, “but what about me? Not that I mind as this afternoon was wonderful. But I don’t think keeping Little Harry happy justifies this.”

“Oh that’s just a fringe benefit, for both of you from what I saw,” Tonks said. “No, you are as much a part and victim of the Old Man as Harry is, but your part did not begin until sometime after the two of you first met. To explain how you got dragged in, I need to cover why Harry lived with the Dursleys all those years. Here Harry,” Tonks said handing Harry a document, “we’ll begin with this.”

Harry looked at the document.

### THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT of JAMES CHARLES POTTER HEIR TO THE HEAD OF THE ANCIENT AND NOBLE HOUSE OF POTTER

20 September 1980

I, JAMES CHARLES POTTER, being of sound mind, hereby make this my Will, to provide from my wife and consort Lily Marie Potter for her life, to provide for the care and education of my Son, Harry James Potter and to pass on to my Son upon his attaining his majority.

Harry was told to skip down a bit as the first sections dealt with assets and the provisions that would only have applied had Lily lived.

#### SECTION III:

I hereby appoint Sirius Orion Black, Godfather of my Son and Heir to the Ancient and Noble House of Black to serve as Magical Guardian for my Son during his minority. In the event that Lord Black should be unable or unwilling to serve as Magical Guardian, I appoint such

duties to Albus, Wulfric Percival Brian Dumbledore to serve in such capacity or such other Wizard as Albus Dumbledore should designate.

Said Guardian shall administer the Trust as he should desire, provided that my Son shall have his educational expenses paid for and provided that 1,000 Galleons per annum be available for his use. Said Trust shall consist of 10% of the monies now in my vault and shall be supplemented with 60% of the annual income from my principal estate until such time as my son attains his majority.

Said Guardian shall have all powers over the person of my son as the Law shall allow to include, without limitation, designating who shall have custody and care for my Son and acting in my stead to approve or reject any contracts for marriage.

“This was the will filed with the Wizangamot and Ministry,” Tonks said. “As you can see, it grants the Old Man significant authority regarding your life in the event Sirius was not able to serve as your guardian.”

“Still doesn’t explain the Dursleys,” Harry said, “especially since his so called blood wards set for my protection either never existed or fell ages ago.”

“No it doesn’t,” Tonks said. “I’ll get to that but first,” she slid another document over to Harry. “This is your father’s real Will, the one recorded with Gringotts. The will you just saw is a forgery.”

“Why am I not surprised,” Harry said as he and Hermione began to read the new will.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT  
of  
JAMES CHARLES POTTER  
HEIR TO THE HEAD OF THE ANCIENT  
AND NOBLE HOUSE OF POTTER

20 September 1981

I, JAMES CHARLES POTTER, being of sound mind, hereby make this my Will, to provide from my wife and consort Lily Marie Potter for

her life, to provide for the care and education of my Son, Harry James Potter and my daughter Clarice Anne Potter until they complete their education and to pass on to my Son upon his attaining his majority.

“Daughter?” Harry asked.

“Your mother gave birth to a daughter, your younger sister on September 5th, 1981,” Tonks said.

Tears fell from Harry’s eyes. “W-what happened to her?”

“We believe she’s still alive. There were only two bodies in the house, those of your parents. We believe the Old Man did something with her, placed her for adoption or some such. But aside from that, we have no idea. Remus is checking into that as we speak.”

“Hate to say this Tonks, but the more you tell me, the more my life sucked.”

“You used the past tense,” Hermione said with a giggle.

“The bastard screwed up everything else,” Harry said. “He screws with what we have, I kill him myself.”

“You’ll have to jump the queue ahead of me,” Hermione nodded.

“Just don’t get upset if I do. I can’t lose you, My Love.

“Nor I you.”

Harry and Hermione continued to read.

### SECTION III:

I hereby appoint Sirius Orion Black, Godfather of my Son and Heir to the Ancient and Noble House of Black to serve as Magical Guardian for my children during their minority. In the event that Lord Black should be unable or unwilling to serve as Magical Guardian, I appoint such duties to the following in order of succession:



My Father, Charles David Potter,  
Frank Sisternal Longbottom  
Theodore Michael Tonks  
Angus Devon Longbottom  
Horace Silus Bones  
Percival C. Cutter  
Devon Rafael Stubbins  
Alfred Alan Carter  
Florean Fortescue  
Simon J. McMillian, III  
Edward Marks, Jr., Director of St. George's Magical Orphanage

If none of the above named individuals are able or willing to serve as Magical Guardian for my children, the Wizengamot shall appoint the successor, provided, however, that under no circumstances should such successor be Albus Dumbledore or any member of the Order of the Phoenix not named above.

"Dumbledore was not supposed to be my guardian ever?" Harry asked.

"No Harry, he was not," Tonks replied. "Your mother trusted the Old Man. Your father was a Potter. The Potters have never trusted him."

"Until me. Until recently I trusted him."

"You weren't raised a Potter."

Harry could only nod as he continued to read the real Will.

#### SECTION IV:

Said Guardian shall administer the Trust set up for the benefit of my children. Said Trust shall consist of 1% of the monies now in my vault and shall be supplemented with 5% of the annual income from my principal estate until such time as my children attain their majority. The trust shall be used solely for the care, housing, clothing and education of my children and for no other purposes other than the direct benefit of my children. Upon each child attaining the age of Six

Years, they shall be allowed an allowance as per the schedule below paid in Galleons or Pounds as appropriate:

Age: Monthly Allowance:

6 50 G

7-8 60 G

9-10 75 G

11 100 G

12 - 13 125 G

14 - 15 175 G

16 250 G

"That's another thing that never happened," Harry observed.

"We think the Old Man has been robbing you blind, Harry," Tonks nodded. "Another thing Remus is looking into."

"What can we do about it?"

Tonks shrugged. "I'm open to suggestions. I have no idea really. Bill Weasley is talking with his goblin contacts at Gringotts to see if there are any legal things we can do without really raising a stink, particularly in the papers."

Harry nodded and continued to read.

#### SECTION V:

Said Guardian shall have all powers over the person of my son and daughter as the Law shall allow except, however, that said Guardian shall be forbidden to arrange, approve or offer my children for marriage or any other form of bonding or to reject any marriage proposal that my children should desire to accept after they attain their majority.

"And Dumbledore had already accepted the Weasley offer?" Harry asked.

Tonks nodded.

“Did Sirius know?”

“We found out about the marriage contract between you and Ginerva a couple of months ago. It was yet another reason why you were emancipated. You are now, by the Will of your Grandfather, Lord Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, and have legal authority to nullify that contract. Of course, the Weasleys will have to return the Bride’s curtesy.”

“The what?”

“In arranged marriages, the family of the bride can ask for a curtesy. This is usually done where that family is not nearly as wealthy as the groom’s or where the bride is particularly desirable and has many offers. It’s a payment. Money. In this case, 25,000 Galleons. Of course, they used that money probably. Arthur had seven children to put through Hogwarts. From Bill we know he does not know that you are the intended groom.”

“Why not?”

“Molly handled the whole thing. She never told him. He merely accepted the fact that he could now send his kids to school and not have to mortgage what little property he had.”

“Do they have to return the money?”

“You can waive it if you desire. Given Molly’s actions, I would recommend that if you do decide to waive it, make them sweat for a while.”

“I don’t fucking believe this! I really don’t want to!”

“Harry, this has been happening for centuries. The Weasley line has not had to deal with this in generations as Ginny is the first Weasley daughter in ages. Molly’s family, on the other hand, they have. Molly and Arthur were not arranged, they supposedly chose each other and as neither family was particularly wealthy ... as in most such situations, the financial arrangements were not observed. But here?

You are the scion of one of the wealthiest Houses in Britain, Harry. They sold her to your House as your wife. If you want my opinion, you were ripped off."

"How so?" Hermione asked this time.

"25,000 is a record curtesy and at the time it was paid by the Old Man, there was no reason to believe Ginny was worth more than 5,000. She was two years old and had yet to even express any magic. 5,000 is a lot for a girl who has not earned a single N.E.W.T. level certification. Even with three, it's pushing it."

"How do I end this nonsense?" Harry asked.

"A letter addressed to Arthur would do. There's a formality to the letter and you must affix your Head of House seal to the letter in lieu of a signature. There is a book in your study with the necessary forms and the Potter Ring and Seal are there as well in a box on the desk."

"Ring?"

"Each head of an Ancient and Noble House has a Ring handed down from his ancestors. Upon the death of your grandfather, the Seal and Ring return to the Master's Jewel Box to await use by the new Lord. Your Grandfather's box is on the desk in your study."

"Should I do it now?"

"Sirius believes you should wait a bit. Once we are finished with this will, I will explain further."

"Okay," Harry said returning to the Will.

## SECTION VI:

Care and Custody of my Children shall be with the family of the above designated Guardian or, if said Guardian is unable or unwilling to provide for their day to day nurturing, care and support, with any of the above identified families as said Guardian shall designate. Should

none of the above families be able or willing to care for my children, it is my wish they should be placed for adoption with a loving Wizarding family unaffiliated with Slytherin House at Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry and preferable residents of Pottersport. If no such adoption is possible, I wish my children be placed in St. George's Orphanage. Under no circumstances are my children to be placed with my Wife's Sister Petunia Dursley and her family.

"I was never supposed to go to the Dursleys," Harry said.

"No Harry," Tonks replied. "No you were not. We think your being sent there and your sister being sent wherever are related and part of the Old Man plan for you. We don't know for certain, but our conclusion fits what evidence we do have. And from that conclusion, we know why the Old Man considers Hermione a bigger threat to his plans than Voldie."

"WHAT?" Harry and Hermione said together.

"What do you mean?" Harry asked.

"The Old Man was told what the Dursleys were like. Your Mum knew what they were like. They had been watched and they were just as vile then as now. The Old Man knew if you went there they would treat you as they did. He may not have known of the extent of the mistreatment, but he knew you would grow up starved of love, friendship, affection, self worth. You would enter his clutches without your own persona. You would be a blank canvass for him and he could mold you into the man he wanted: the selfless martyr. You would never think of not being one because you would grow having never had hopes or dreams for the future.

"Once you turned eleven and came to Hogwarts, your exposure to love, affection, respect and friendship was to be controlled by the Old Man. Your first exposure to our world was Hagrid. He probably has no idea what the Old Man is on about. He is exactly as you have known him. He's too kind to knowingly participate in such a plan. But, he is also too trusting of others.

"Your first train ride was a part of the plan as well. All students are told how to get onto Platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ , even Muggle Borns. You were not. Your arrival timed the arrival of the Weasleys who showed you how to get to the train. Molly was in charge of that one."

"She was?"

"She was told to wait for you Harry. She also made sure one young Ron Weasley knew what you looked like so he could sit with you on the train and ..."

"Become my friend," Harry finished sadly.

"As you had been starved of love, affection and friendship, the Old Man knew you would soak up anything that even seemed like it. He felt he could control your relationships and thus mold you into what he wanted. Ron was one of the controls. It helped that he has a massive inferiority complex and is a below average wizard. The Old Man wanted you to be a lackluster student. Ron would see to it that you were, not because he was told to, but because he is what he is.

"You were to be surrounded by trustworthy Purebloods or those who the Old Man believed were absolutely loyal to him. It was why Sirius was locked up, because Sirius was not trust worthy in the Old Man opinion - particularly when it came to you. It was why you were allowed to spend summers with the Weasleys. If you think about it, that made no sense. If Privet Drive was so well protected, why allow you out at all?"

Harry nodded for that was one of the questions he had.

"The Weasleys were to be your real family. Ron was to be your best mate. Ginny was to become your romantic mate. Molly was to help guide you towards your ultimate demise as a martyr. In our world, the general view is that good people do not kill and evil people do. You were to be taught to believe that, thus it would be harder for you to actually take another's life."

"And yet I have," Harry said. "Twice. And I would have at the Ministry if I knew how - or if I had a gun."

"Hence, the Hermione situation."

"What?" Hermione complained. "But I never told him to kill or anything!"

"You were the last person the Old Man wanted to become a part of Harry's life. You were smart and studious and would encourage him to learn. The Old Man wanted him weak. You are Muggle raised and with your intelligence would question the status quo in our society. The Old Man wanted Harry to accept it. As a Muggle raised child, you know that good and evil is about motives far more than actions. You know that the good can kill another and not become evil for doing so. This is contrary to the Old Man thinking.

"You were also so unexpected, Hermione. You came into Harry's life at a time when most boys and girls cannot and will not relate to one another, much less become friends. Still, he took no action because while you were his friend and while you clearly had helped Harry succeed where he should have failed, so long as you remained just friends, his ultimate plans were still viable."

"So he had plans to deal with me as well?"

Tonks nodded. "Recent developments have made it clear to the Old Man that it may be years before Harry can be sent against Voldie per his plan. Harry will be of age by then and have come into his inheritance. Thus, the Old Man plan for an heir are now the primary plan. Harry is to marry Ginny per arrangement on August 17th. She's to bear his heir. You are the problem, Hermione."

"Aside from the fact I think this is sick and the fact that I love Harry and he loves me and I am going to be the mother of his children, why am I the problem?"

"You are not a Pureblood. The Old Man cannot tolerate the thought of an heir of Potter born from what he considers a vile coupling. He also knows he cannot control you and cannot kill you without raising suspicion. You are too damn smart, in his opinion. None of this really

mattered until recently. He had some plans, but so long as you and Harry remained just friends, there was no reason to implement them.”

“Then there was the Battle,” Harry said.

Tonks nodded. “Actually, it was after, but yes. It seems to me what happened forced you two to finally admit what had been obvious to many for so long. Sirius and Remus had a bet going. It was when you two would see the truth, not if. Sirius bet it would be this summer, Remus said next summer or later. Sirius won, but cannot collect of course.

“Ron Weasley was told two years ago to become Hermione’s boyfriend. He does fancy her a bit, but his Mum’s Pureblood prejudices have held him back. That and the fact that he’s a wimp when it comes to girls. Still, he’s been telling the Old Man and his Mum that Hermione was warming up to him and would be his soon.”

“Fat fucking chance,” Hermione said. “Even without what you’ve told us, I’d rather be a spinster than Ron’s.”

“A point that came to light only recently on the day you woke up following the Battle,” Tonks agreed. “You two confessed your love for each other and basically cut Ron and Ginny out of your lives, at least as possible romance is concerned, if not in all things. Molly’s plan, which had been discussed, was now given top priority.”

“What plan?” Harry and Hermione asked.

“There were two reasons you were sent to live with the Dursleys,” Tonks continued. “You were groomed to be vulnerable to affection and thus easily manipulated. But, by living as a Muggle, you also were left ignorant of our world. You know little about the customs and traditions. Had you been raised in this world, you could never have been manipulated by the Old Man. Your magical caretakers would have seen what he was up to and you would have known he was trying to screw you over. You probably would have accepted an offer to attend St. Georges.”

“I - I never got an offer...”



"I did," Hermione said.

"I never ..."

"The Old Man has been tampering with your mail since the day your parent's were killed, Harry. Your only sure form of post is your own owl."

"Which he discourages me from using."

"Because he cannot mess with it. Now, this ignorance of our world is the key to Molly's scheme. As bright as she is, Hermione entered our world as clueless as you did. She too was not raised in our customs or traditions. The ones at issue here are in books, but the books are banned from Hogwarts."

"Why?" Hermione asked.

"Dumbledore feels the information would be upsetting to Muggle Borns."

"More so than being called a Mudblood?"

"Much more so, I'm afraid. Certainly to a bright witch like Hermione here."

"Why's that?"

"In the Muggle World, while men and women are not truly equal yet, a bright young woman has almost limitless prospects for her future. The law promotes equality as does the society's expectations. This is not true in the Wizarding World - at least here in Britain. We are at least 400 years behind our Muggle neighbors in a lot of things, maybe even further.

"In the Wizarding World, all Wizards are considered socially superior to all witches. Witches are little more than the property of their families."

“WHAT?” Hermione screeched! Harry held her hand to help her regain some composure.

“I don’t see you that way, Love,” he whispered. “Then again, I was not raised that way. She’s telling us about the system that exists. The system is a threat to you, probably a huge threat if you are ignorant about it. But it is a system. If we know enough about it, it can be manipulated.”

Hermione nodded. “G-go on.”

“For the most part, in our society, a witch gets only what wizards allow her to get. All the outstanding N.E.W.T.s in the world mean nothing if no wizard lifts a finger to help the witch make use of her abilities. To maximize her potential, a witch must have a wizard patron to open doors for her. Without a patron, Hermione’s job prospects are bleak. The better the patron, the better her prospects.”

“But how would a Muggle Born like me find a patron?”

“Unless born to a Noble House, in which case your Head of House is your patron unless you manage to do better, the easiest way is to marry one. As a witch, and unlike wizards, your Head of House, wizard father or magical guardian retains significant control over your life until you turn twenty-five. The reason is it is his obligation to see to it that you obtain a patron.”

“And if he doesn’t?”

“A witch would be lucky to get a job cleaning toilets at the Leaky Cauldron. Likewise, if he finds his charge a powerful patron, the witch could become the next Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic despite never having passed a single O.W.L.”

“You mean Umbridge,” Hermione began.

“Flunked out of Hogwarts.

“As a Muggle Born, because you have no Head of House, there are only three ways you can acquire a partron. As I said earlier, you can

marry one. But as I also said earlier, you can only marry with your Guardian's consent. Right now, that means the only partron you can expect with the Old Man consent is Ron Weasley."

"I'd be lucky to get a job stocking shelves at Flourish and Blotts," Hermione moped.

Tonks nodded in agreement, her low opinion of their former friend showing. "The legal marriage is no stronger or weaker than it is for Muggles. In Pureblood and aristocratic society, it is used to create alliances between families for either political or financial gain. The bride and groom do not have to consent. Wizards can be married off at any time before they attain their majority. Witches at anytime before their twenty-fifth birthday. Most such marriages are loveless affairs. The couple has only one thing they are expected to do - reproduce.

"Consequently, it is not uncommon for them to find love elsewhere. For the witch, it is usually in the bed of another witch as there is no stigma associated with that. For the wizard, some take Mistresses, although that can be risky and is illegal if the woman is bound to another wizard. More often, they take a slave."

"A wh-what?"

"A consort or a concubine. These are witches that are bound to a wizard by magic. It enslaves them to varying degrees, the most notable form is that they will remain utterly and totally faithful to the wizard."

"I take it there's a difference?" Hermione asked.

"Indeed. A concubine is sold and bound against her will. She's sold by her father, Head of House or magical guardian for money. Sometimes it's a private sale between wizards, but every year there is a public auction."

"This is unbelievable!"

"But true," Tonks said. Harry noted an odd smile on her face. "The concubine bond suppresses free will in the witch. She's is allowed only as much as her Master desires. Her primary function is to serve her Master. This always involves sex. Young concubines are almost always sex toys. Older ones are purchased to serve in other capacities as well, such as nanny's, wet nurses or breeding stock. Concubines can work outside the home and you would be surprised to learn that there are probably concubines in most jobs. Their pay, however, is the property of their Master. The quality of their lives varies from Master to Master. Some concubines live quite full lives, have challenging occupations and earn a name for themselves. Others are little more than whores or House Elves. Regardless, they have no choice in the matter."

"There's a reason you're telling us this, isn't there," Harry said.

Tonks nodded. She lay what looked like a magazine before them. There was no picture on the cover. All it said was "Calpart's Auction House, 121 Diagon Alley, London. July 15th 1996 Lot Catalog."

"Open this to page 44," Tonks said.

They did as instructed. When they reached the page, both of the teens gasped. Page 44 was a picture of Hermione. On page 45, there was a description:

#### HERMIONE JANE GRANGER

Born September 19, 1979. MUGGLE BORN. Completed 5th Year Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Stands at top of her year. O.W.L.s pending and posting will be updated July 10. Vitals: 5'7". Brown curly hair, brown eyes, 37-24-36, 122 lbs. Bra size - C cup. Believed to be unspoiled. Wand: Vine w/Dragon Heartstring

Initial asking price: 150G

Seller 1276 (Dumbledore was written beside the number in pen)

Pre-Auction Bidding Interest Expressed:

Buyer 1197 (Malfoys)

Buyer 32113 (The Old Man/Weasleys)

Buyer 32168 (Us)

"They're going to sell me, Harry," Hermione wailed. "They are going to sell me like cattle!" Harry pulled her into a hug.

"The Old Man primary plan for you two was to place you in arranged marriages with the Weasleys. Molly's been bugging him since last summer that something might develop between you two and so she came up with a contingency which the Old Man approved if you two fell in love or got into a relationship.

"For Harry, he will be sent food from Ginny laced with Amorentia," Tonks said.

"What's that?" Harry asked.

"L-love potion," Hermione whimpered. "V-very p-powerful, bloody near impossible to make and illegal."

Tonks nodded. "10 years is Azkaban if caught. Under the influence of that potion, Harry would forget all about Hermione and fall madly in love with Ginny. He would marry the girl without question and be driven to knock her up. The potion becomes nearly permanent if the couple has a child."

"But w-why sell me," Hermione sobbed. "Why not just dose me up as well?"

"Molly wasn't too keen on her boy marrying you. You are, after all, a Muggle Born. If you were his concubine, you would be under his control and he would still be free to take a Pureblood wife."

"This is just sick," Hermione sobbed. Tonks nodded.

"We trusted them," Harry added. "Who's 'us?' How can we stop this?"

"Us is a company Sirius started up about a month ago when we learned this was a possibility. Hermione was not to be bound without reason the Old Man insisted, but it was an option he would use should reason arise.

"The Company is called RPG Entertainment Services, Ltd. It's about as real as Father Christmas. It is set up to look like a concubine brokerage house. Although you won't find it anywhere, Harry is the sole shareholder in the company. Our last resort plan was to buy Hermione for Harry."

"And then I could free her," Harry said.

"No Harry, you could not. Once she is bound as a concubine, it is for life. You could only sell her off."

"And what if I don't bond with her?"

"The sale is voided after six months or so and she would be resold at the next auction."

"So, unless we can stop the first sale altogether, Hermione will become a concubine?"

Tonks nodded.

"Guess I'll just have to buy her then," Harry said clearly not happy with this prospect.

"I - I c-could live with that," Hermione said, "I d-don't like it. But I could live with it."

"And the Old Man?" Harry asked.

"Ron wants his plaything. He got Molly to get a magic oath from the Old Man to outbid the Malfoys."

"That's it?"

Tonks nodded.

“So all we have to do is stay in and outbid Dumbldore?”

Tonks nodded. “350 Galleons should do it. Maybe a little more. The Malfoys have never paid more than 300 for a Muggle Born. Even if Draco wants her, he’s not going to go much higher than that.”

“You said last resort,” Hermione noted. “What else do you have in mind?”

Tonks nodded. “The Old Man can’t sell if he lacks the right to sell. If, by July 15th, he is no longer your magical guardian, the sale is off.”

“And how can we make that happen?”

“Harry is an emancipated minor and Head of House now,” Tonks said. “First off, he can break the contract with the Weasleys. As head of an Ancient and Noble House, should Ginny try and use that potion, by law Harry has the right to enslave her as his Concubine if he wishes.”

“What if someone does it for her,” Hermione asked.

“The object of the potion is what becomes forfeit. The maker and sender of the potion would face severe criminal sanctions.”

“And Hermione?”

“I assume you’re of bonding age,” Tonks said.

“W-what’s that?” Hermione asked.

“It’s been at least six months since your first period?”

“More like over four years.”

“There is one bond that a magical guardian is powerless to stop or interfere with.”

“What’s that?”

“The Consort Bond.”

“That’s a kind of slavery,” Harry noted.

“True. But it is one that benefits both people. In that bond you become more than the sum of your parts, as it were. You are bonded by consent and by love and the bond enhances love, trust, faithfulness, all the positive aspects of a relationship while suppressing the negatives. The majority of all marriages are Consort Bonds. In fact, under the law, the Consort is a wife and her Master is her husband. True, the man can take a wife for political purposes, but she is second to the Consort in all things except the production of an heir.

“And how does this happen?”

“The witch offers herself to the wizard. She recites an oath, the precise wording is not critical so long as the main components are covered. The wizard then accepts her as his Consort and the Bonding rite is performed, although the order of these events is not critical.”

“What’s the rite entail,” Hermione asked.

“Nudity and sex,” Tonks replied. “Specifically, the couple must be naked the whole time, the witch must recite the oath, the wizard must accept, they must orally bring the other to climax and they must have sexual intercourse to conclusion. Although not required, it is said it helps if both lovers climax during intercourse.”

“So if she becomes my Consort?”

“The Old Man and the Weasley’s plans are ruined. They can’t touch you.”

“What about the auction?”

“The moment you’re bonded, she is off the block as it were. Her name will be removed from the ledger and from the final auction catalogs.”



“So she cannot be sold then?”

“No.”

“Hermione?”

“I’d like to read a little about it first.”

“Of course,” Harry smiled.

“But, it sounds like something I would like.”

“Great! So how soon can we do this, Tonks?”

“Oddly enough, you two already have.”

“WHAT?” the two teens cried out.

“That last time you had sex, and I assume that was not the first, Hermione said an oath offering herself and Lord Potter accepted.”

“But that was just a silly thing I read in a dirty romance novel I borrowed from one of my roommates,” Hermione complained.

“That was the Consort’s Oath, Hermione. And I assume you two also had oral sex during your afternoon play?”

They nodded.

“But, I didn’t know,” Hermione said.

“You meant what you said, though,” Tonks replied. Hermione blushed. She had meant it, she just didn’t understand the full implications.

“When the two of you came that last time, you glowed magically as the bond took hold.”

“That’s what happened?” Hermione asked, “that’s why Harry passed out?”

“There were two magical pulses, Hermione. The first enveloped you and Harry. You would not have seen it as you were both part of it. The second one only affected Harry and I have no idea what it was, only that it is not related to the bond.”

“Oh.”

“As I said, you two had a very interesting afternoon today.”

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79).  
Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER  
6/23/96.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: ON BONDING

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 1996. Potter Manor.

Harry awoke in a room filled with sunshine following the best night's sleep he could remember. His sleep was filled with pleasant dreams instead of the nightmares about death. All his dreams centered on one young woman and their life together. He wasn't certain about what happened yesterday. He and his Hermione and not really done that, had they? They were not now magically married, were they?

He opened his eyes. He felt a warm weight pressing against his body. He saw a brown blur of hair and felt the head of its owner against his chest. He could smell her. He felt her soft skin beneath his arms and hands. He was warm. He felt loved, perhaps for the first time in his life, or at least for the first time he could remember. He realized that yesterday, as bizarre as it was, was quite real. His naked wife pressing against him was proof positive of that.

If it were up to him, they would never get out of bed again. However, he realized reality was a problem. Right now, the reality was his feeling an increasingly urgent need that had nothing to do with the beautiful angel in his arms. As much as he wanted to stay right here like this forever, nature was calling and he had to get up.

He squeezed her gently wondering if she was awake, asleep or just dozing. A soft, contented sigh escaped her lips.

"Sleeping?" he whispered.

"Mmmm," she replied.

"It's morning," he continued.

"I know," she whispered back.

"Think we should get up?"

"Don't want to. Too cozy," she purred back.

Harry gently pushed her off of him and onto her back. She gave him a playful pout.

“Well, I have to get up,” he said after kissing her lightly.

“Why?” she whimpered playfully.

“Well, it’s either that or I stay here with you...”

“That’s what I want.”

“...and wet the bed.”

“Oh,” she giggled. “Yes, I don’t want that.”

After a long kiss, Harry got up and headed to the Master Bath, which itself was probably the size of the ground floor at the Dursleys. There were four toilets, five sinks, a small bath tub as Harry called it. It was small because it could probably only hold three people. The large bath tub was practically a swimming pool. The shower was equally huge and could easily accommodate six people. Harry wondered at why the bathroom was so large and then decided it was simply a wealth thing. It was large because it could be, not because it needed to be.

Harry stepped into the shower and began to wash himself. It wasn’t long before he realized he was not alone and another pair of soapy hands was caressing his back. He turned and saw a naked and wet Hermione smiling up at him.

“I wanted to help you,” she said with a grin.

“Wish I thought of that,” Harry chuckled as he began soaping her up while he washed him. The result of this activity was predictable as Harry’s basilisk was wide awake as the couple rinsed off. Hermione was looking at him with an odd pout.

“What?” Harry asked.

“I - I can’t.”

“Can’t what?”

“Let it play in my chamber,” she whimpered.

“Why?”

“It’s sore.”

“Oh. Sorry.”

“Don’t be. You didn’t make me do anything I didn’t want. And I promise to make it up to you later today and shag you silly.”

“Can’t wait.”

“In the meantime,” she added with a mischievous grin, “maybe I can add another of my fantasies to my I’ve-Done-That-With-Harry list.”

“And what, pray tell, is that, you little slut?”

“Sucking you off in the shower.”

“That’s only mildly erotic.”

“In my real fantasy, it’s the girls shower at school.”

“Are there other girls there?”

“Most certainly,” Hermione said as she knelt before him. Before he could say another word, he watched as he disappeared into her mouth. If anything, he thought as he watched her suck him off, she’s even better than before. She did not take long to get him moaning with pleasure. He felt his orgasm rapidly approaching and told her he was going to come. Just like the first time, she did not stop and kept sucking him long after he came in her mouth. She finally stood up.

After a long kiss, she told Harry he could do the same to her, if he wanted to. Harry needed no further encouragement and was soon on his own knees, exploring her once again with his tongue. Her knees buckled and she slid down the wall of the shower. Soon she was lying on the floor, her legs spread wide from her lover, moaning with pleasure as he worked his magic on her sex, bringing her to a swift, powerful and load orgasm.

Fully showered, the couple were drying themselves and each other, taking in each other's bodies with interest.

"I was, um, just wondering," he said glancing at Hermione's hairless bits.

"Wondering what?"

"Well, I used to nick nudie magazines from my cousin and all the women had hair down there."

"Yes?"

"And you don't."

"I know."

"Um - why?"

"You know how bushy the hair on my head can get," she said.

Harry nodded.

"Well, it was just as bad down there. It was annoying and it looked gross. Practically from the day I started Hogwarts, I noted there were at least a few older girls who were bald down there. So the summer before Third Year I used a Muggle hair remover. It's not permanent, but it's more comfortable than shaving, and faster. I had already been using it on my legs and underarms. And that's a sensitive area. Fourth year, when we were learning spells and curses for the

Tournament, I came across a fairly useless one. It removes hair permanently or at least until the counter-curse is performed. So I cursed the unwanted hair away.”

“Do - do you like it?”

“I definitely prefer my bare pussy to the hairy one. Do you?”

“Yeah,” Harry said. “I do.”

“But,” she added, “I do like your hairy bits and prefer them to bald ones, so don’t even think about getting rid of your hair.”

“Whatever turns you on, Love,” Harry said with a smile.

As Tonks had some additional errands to run and Hermione was in the Library reading books Tonks had laid out on Consorts, Concubines and certain kinds of bonds and bonding rites, Harry spent the morning exploring the Manor. The day before he had only seen the ground floor and a small fraction of the private apartments on the first floor. This morning he checked out his study and found that in addition to a personal water closet, just off the study was a large conference room. There were six bedroom suites on the floor in addition to the Master’s and Mistresses suites. These suites had their own sitting room, playroom and / or study, the bedchamber and a private bath. There was also a small library on the floor, a large parlor, a second study that Harry presumed was for the Mistress, a kitchen and a room that he thought of as a music room as it had a grand piano and other musical things.

Harry had learned to play at a young age. His relatives had frequently sent him to the home of Mrs. Figg, a widow who lived within a short walk of the Dursleys. Harry had always thought she was a bit batty, but she was nice to him. That was more than he could say about the relatives he lived with or anyone they seemed to know. Mrs. Figg began teaching him when he was about five. His payment was to listen to her as she went on about her multitude of cats, but that was minor. Before learning he was a wizard, Harry had come to learn he had two talents. He could cook extremely well and he could play the

piano. He cooked because his Aunt hated to and he was available. She had taught him the basics. He suspected he was well beyond that when he learned he was a wizard. Mrs. Figg encouraged him in many things, but in particular music.

At primary school, when they were allowed electives, he had chosen music in no small part than because his cousin wanted nothing to do with it. His skills at the piano were recognized immediately by the music teacher. Ms. Williams encouraged him and offered him lessons at not cost. He accepted and managed somehow to convince Ms. Williams to tell his relatives he was being tutored in other subjects because he had a learning problem. Anything to make him look less talented than his barely functional cousin was a good thing.

Playing the piano was something that had nothing to do with the Dursleys. In fact, he was certain they didn't even know. He was also quite good and had been encouraged to give recitals, but that would have required the Dursleys' permission, something he was sure they would never give. They would probably put a stop to his playing altogether as he was not allowed to be better than Dudley at anything except chores and cooking. Cooking was another thing he liked doing. Even though it was a chore, when he was cooking his god awful relatives left him alone.

Hogwarts did not have a piano, or if it did he was unaware of it. Consequently, his one "secret" talent could not be continued. He had replaced music with Quidditch at school. Now he had a piano and no Dursleys to worry about. He spent a couple of hours playing. He hated to admit it, but he was very rusty by his former standards and it might take weeks to get back in form. Still, it was a relaxing way to spend the morning.

He had just finished working his way through a piece by Chopin, surprised with the treasure trove of sheet music he found in this Music Room and was thinking of trying to relearn a piece he had learned the spring of his last year before Hogwarts by Scott Joplin when a voice interrupted him.

"I didn't know you could play," it said. Harry looked up and saw Hermione standing in the door to the room.



“Oh. Well, I used to.”

“I’d say you still can,” she smiled.

“Haven’t really since starting Hogwarts. I was a lot better before, I think.”

“Still, you are a man of many surprises.”

Harry smiled at her. “I can also cook,” he quipped. “But I’m never doing dishes again!”

Hermione laughed. “Turns out, I played too when I was little.”

“Piano?”

She shook her head. “Violin. 1st chair in my school orchestra.”

“Really? That’s great! Maybe we could make music together?”

“We already have,” she quipped. “Just not with notes.”

Harry chuckled. He never knew she had such a randy mind.

“Now how about some lunch,” she said. “After we can go to the Library and I can tell you what I’ve learned about this bonds.”

“What? No sex?”

“Later. Still a little sore. But if you want, I can suck you off for desert. I wouldn’t mind a Harry sucker.”

The two teens were seated at a table in the library. Somehow, they remained fully clothed. Hermione had three books on bonds and bonding rituals spread out on the table and a fourth on Ancient and Noble Houses which she said was important too.

“Tonks left these books here last night along with a note to me telling me what she thought I should read. These books cover certain kinds of bonding and the oaths and rites that create those bonds. The three bonds I was asked to read about were: the Consort Bond, the Concubine Bond and the Fealty Bond. They are all versions of a category of bonds called Loyalty Bonds.”

“Loyalty Bonds?” Harry asked.

“Basically, it is a bond that creates and maintains the loyalty of the bonded to the bonder.” Hermione replied.

“How does it do that?”

“To the extent that an act of disloyalty requires the exercise of a person’s free will, that free will is suppressed. Even if they want to be disloyal, they cannot be.”

“And this is the bond between us?” Harry asked. “I didn’t want that.”

“It’s okay, Harry,” Hermione said soothingly. “Remember, I would have to want to betray you for the bond to suppress my will. So long as my true desires, wants and ideas are consistent with the bond, I’m the same person I was before.

“The bonded person is loyal to the bonder. I’ve always been loyal to you, Harry. The bonded cannot lie to the bonder. I may have not told you the whole truth about some things, but I’ve never lied to you. The bonded will never betray the bonder or the bonder’s secrets to anyone. I never want to betray you, Harry. Those traits are consistent in all three bonds. With the Consort Bond and Concubine Bond, the bonded can never hurt or be made to hurt the bonder or any of his family. You know I’ve never wanted that, Harry.”

“Does the bonded have to do what the bonder tells them too?”

“It depends both upon the type of bond and what they are being told to do, but in general, yes.”

“Even if they don’t want to?”

Hermione nodded. “It varies from bond to bond, but yes.”

“So I took advantage of you?” Harry began.

“No Harry! You did not! Our bond did not form until after we had been making love for hours. Everything that happened yesterday, and this morning, I wanted to do! I suppose you could have ordered me to fuck you this morning when I was sore and I would have probably had to comply, even if I didn’t really want to, but you didn’t.”

“I’ll try not to.”

“Thanks Harry.”

“Now suck my cock.”

“Okay,” Hermione said with a smile as she began to slide off of her chair.

“Stop!” Harry commanded. “I was kidding.” Hermione got back into her chair. “You were going to do it?”

Hermione nodded.

“Is that because I told you to or you wanted to.”

“If you want a blow job, I want to give it to you, Milord.”

“And that has nothing to do with the bond?”

“Not that I can tell. Although I did want to complain that you’re insatiable and kept my mouth shut. That might have something to do with the bond, but I don’t know. I really do like sex with you, Harry. I really want as much sex with you as I can stand. I wanted that from

the moment you first made me cum. And that was before we bonded.”

“Okay. So what else do I need to know?”

“Remember that I said the bonded cannot betray the bonder or the bonder’s secrets?”

Harry nodded.

“Well, one of the things this means is that I am at least somewhat immune to the imperious curse.”

“What? How’s that possible?”

“The imperious curse is a form of compulsion magic. So are loyalty bonds. The bonds, however, are much more powerful and longer lasting. If the enemy were to use that curse on me in any manner that would lead to betraying you, betraying your secrets, going against your orders or wishes, or causing harm to you, me or any member of your house, the spell simply won’t work at all.”

“That could be useful.”

“Very. One of the Death Eater’s tactics in a large scale engagement is to imperious some to the other side into attacking their own side. That won’t work if they are under a powerful loyalty bond.”

“But they can still affect me?”

“No Harry. You cannot betray me either, which means you cannot be forced to. As with me, you cannot be imperioused to hurt me unless you wanted to in the first place. Basically, you cannot be forced to do something regarding me against your will by any magic known.”

“I’m glad to know that, Hermione. I don’t think I could live with myself if I did. Any other benefits?”

“As I said, I cannot betray you. The Consort Bond and Fealty Bond also would prevent you from betraying me. This means two things. First, we will have no secrets from each other. I can’t lie to you and you can’t lie to me.”

“Oh no!”

“What?”

“Promise me you’ll go easy on the ‘girl’ questions.”

“Girl questions?”

“Does this dress make me look fat?”

Hermione giggled. “I can see how that might be a problem. I promise to try and avoid that, okay?”

“Thanks.”

“Any way, I will eventually know everything about you and you everything about me. This means we may one day be able to passively legillimize each other.”

“What?”

“We will be able to access each other’s thoughts, memories and feelings. There are accounts of Consorts and their Husbands who stopped talking. Not because they stopped communicating, rather because they no longer had to speak to each other out loud. They were communicating with their minds. There are also accounts of where they came to feel everything the other felt. It was said to make their sex lives amazing as each could feel the other’s pleasure. Then again, the poor guy could also feel the pain of child birth and his Consort’s discomfort when she was menstruating.”

“Um, first bits sounds cool. The last bit not so much.”

“It doesn’t happen all the time, Milord. There are only a handful of cases where the couple could truly feel what their partner felt and even then it was not all the time. They had to focus on it, it says.”

“Oh. That’s a relief, I guess.”

“On the other side, I can never reveal your secrets to anyone not bonded to you. That means, I cannot be legillimized for information and veritaserum will not work on me to make me talk about what I know about you or your plans. I can only say what others not bonded already know. The protection also prevents anyone from forcing any information from you against your will.”

“Now that’s useful!”

“Indeed it is, Milord.”

“So I don’t have to learn Occlumency?”

“Arguably not. It’s still a useful skill to learn. But so long as I or another bonded to you knows that which you wish to hide, no. Not even Voldemort or Dumbledore can access those thoughts.”

“Anything else?”

“With a Consort or a Concubine, you can summon or be called.”

“What’s that mean?”

“If we are apart, say I was at Hogwarts and you were here, you could summon me to you and I would come. Likewise, I could call you to me if I was in trouble and you could find me.”

“What about the wards? Surely you can’t pass through the wards here or me at Hogwarts. You said so. You said it’s written in Hogwarts: A History.”

“Actually, this form of travel can pass through any wards known. The only limiting factor is unless you or I are there, we would have to first know where there was. For example, I can in theory go home to my parents place and then come back here no problem. You can leave here and go anywhere you know of no problem. And even if I’ve never been there before, you can summon and I would follow.”

“And how do we do that?”

“We need things keyed into each other,” Hermione said. “Consorts and Concubines wear special collars around their necks. This is the device that allows them to call their Master to them and to jump when they need to. To be summoned, their Master needs his family ring or Master’s ring.”

“But we don’t have these things?” Harry complained.

“I’m pretty sure the Potter ring Tonks told you about is the ring that will call me to you.”

“And your collar?”

“Apparently, once you put on the ring, my collar should appear.”

“And anyone can see it?”

“No Milord. The collar of a Consort or Concubine can only be seen by those who are bound to their Master and those the Master allows to know about their status. While Consorts are generally not secrets, Concubines usually are.”

“Why?”

“Well, if you ask me it’s really silly, but...”

“But what?”

“Concubines are a part of British Wizarding culture and society for that matter. They have been throughout history. It is estimated that as many as one third of all witches over the age of sixteen are concubines. Apparently, for Muggle Borns such as myself, the majority are. So you would figure that being a concubine shouldn’t such a big deal, and yet it can best be described as a dirty little secret of our world, you see.”

“ Dirty little secret?” Harry had to admit that the notion on Concubines was just that. Still, from what Tonks had said last night and Hermione so far today, he was surprised that what was common place was also such a secret.

“Even though perhaps a third of all witches of age are concubines,” Hermione said, “their status in society is ... well ... they are at the bottom. They are viewed by all other witches as little more than whores and by most wizards as little more than property to be bought, played with and sold. Yet, at the same time, many of them are in exclusive relationships with their masters or at least are not shared with others. They attend school. Many have jobs, even quite respectable ones. Many bear their masters’ children and in some cases the sons become heirs. Still, even the ones who are well treated and have careers, family and a rather nice life, they fear being exposed as what they are because they are viewed as being at best marginally better than a Muggle.”

“It’s fair to say, from what I’ve read, that they may be suspected as what they are by those around them: family, co-workers, friends. Above a certain age single witch without a known boyfriend, be he muggle or wizard, is generally believed as either being a concubine or a lesbian, the latter being even lower on the social scale. What really makes it worse is that in all likelihood not one concubine is bonded as such by their choice.

“What makes the thing so hypocritical is that there’s little difference between a Consort like me and a Concubine in so far as their bond is concerned. The only real difference is I chose to be bonded with you and I did so out of love. Yet I am considered equal to a wife and the concubine is not.”



Harry did not. "Perhaps you should explain the difference between a Consort and a Concubine."

"For all practical purposes, a Consort is the wife of the wizard she is bonded to."

"So we're married?"

Hermione nodded. "According to law and custom, as you have no wife, I am your wife and have been for about a day."

"Hermione? Do you mind? I mean we've been boyfriend and girlfriend for less than a week and now we're married?"

"It's a bit quicker than I had hoped, Milord. And I must admit at least a part of me wanted the whole wedding thing..."

"We can still have one"

"Thanks, Harry," Hermione said softly. "I would like that one day."

"So you don't mind?"

"I love you, Harry. It's sooner than I expected, but I've wanted to be your wife for some time. Actually, being your Consort is better than simply being your wife."

"H-how so?"

"The magical bond that made me your consort," Hermione replied. "In addition to the other goodies we've discussed, the Consort Bond reinforces and strengthens the relationship we already had before we bonded. Of course, the bond itself does urge me to call you either Milord or Master when we are alone like this instead of Harry."

"Really?"

Hermione nodded.

“And I thought you were just being cheeky.”

Hermione shrugged. “We will become even closer than before and even now. Our love will only strengthen as time goes on. I will be yours, only yours and always yours for the rest of my life.”

“And me?”

“I will always be first in your heart. We will never break up.”

“I mean, will you always be my only?”

“I’d like to be. But you are the Head of an Ancient and Noble House and based upon what we learned last night, it’s fair to believe you’re the head of two such houses.” When Harry’s eyebrows rose, Hermione continued. “Sirius was the last Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, Harry. He died without issue, without a son or daughter. Had he died without a Will, his title and property will pass to his closest living male relative in the next generation. As that is Draco Malfoy, I doubt Sirius would allow that to happen.

“As the Head of his House, having no son to inherit the title, Sirius could by his Will designate the new Lord Black and cut Malfoy out altogether. The only requirement is the new Lord Black must be a male descendant of a former Head of the House of Black. You are. Sirius and your common ancestor was Phineus Nigellus Black, his Great-great Grandfather and your Great-great-great Grandfather. His granddaughter Dorea married your Great-grandfather. So, you are eligible to be the next Lord Black.

“Great,” Harry moaned. Deep down the only thing he wanted in life was Hermione. The fame, earned or otherwise, the money, the titles all meant nothing to him. Trying to lighten himself up he said: “So that means you’re Lady Black as well?”

“No, Harry it does not. You would not be the first man to become the Head of two Ancient and Noble Houses. It’s happened on occasion,

the last time about three hundred years ago. The law is that a wife or consort can only bear the heir of one house even if the husband is head of two."

"So the Black line ends with me?"

"No. If you produce no male heir to the line, it will pass to the nearest Black male relation."

"Again, that would be Malfoy?"

"Or his son if he has one by then."

"Great! Last thing I'd want is letting that git have anything!"

"There is a way around it, love."

"And what's that?"

"Obviously, you need to have a son to carry on the Black line."

"But you said you can't do that! You're the Consort of the Potter line!"

"That's true. I cannot."

"But that means ... you must be joking!"

"As Head of an Ancient and Noble House, you are allowed by law to take a wife and a Consort. The one you take first generally will bear the heir to the line, unless of course she does not. As the Head of two such houses, you are allowed the same right for each House."

"So I can have two wives?"

"Up to four actually: A Potter Consort - me, a Black Consort, a Potter wife and a Black wife. You don't need all four, though."

“Are you suggesting what I think you are?”

“If you are indeed Lord Black as well, yes Milord. I am suggesting you either take a wife or a Consort at the very least. If possible, although a wife might be easier to get I would say because of the bond, a Consort would be the preferable option.”

“You’re serious, aren’t you?”

“No. He’s the one who left this to you. I’m Hermione.”

“Channeling now?”

“No. Just trying to lighten you up a little.”

“And why would a wife be easier to get?”

“First off, we know there are offers out there because Dumbledore accepted one on your behalf for Ginny Weasley. Now that offer was probably made for my position and not Sirius’s.”

“Besides, I don’t want to marry her. Kill her? Maybe. But...”

“It’s her Mum who’s the real problem.”

“And Dumbledore,” Harry added.

“The problem with a wife is that she is not bonded to you magically and marrying her necessarily places you in an alliance with her family. There are no political strings associated with a Consort.”

“Bloody hell!”

“You don’t have to do anything yet. Even if Sirius did what I suspect and name you as the next Lord Black, until the reading of his will, you cannot take a wife as Lord Black.”

“How ‘bout a Consort?”

“That you can. But what are the odds that there’s another girl who’s truly in love with you who will offer herself to you of her own free will between now and the middle of July?”

“Ginny probably would.”

“And would you want that?”

“I would practically be handing the Black property over to the Old Man, wouldn’t I?”

“To the extent she could exercise free will to do so, yes. But that would be limited. What you would be doing is giving the Weasley family access to your property, which would include this Manor. While the bond might keep Ginny in control, her mother and Ronald are another matter altogether.”

“That and I suppose I have to have some feelings for her? I have to at least trust her somewhat for the bond to form, right?”

“Correct. Thus she is out of the question. So, unless you get lucky and have the right woman fall out of the sky, you’re probably out of luck in the Consort finding department for the foreseeable future. We’re sort of in hiding. Not many dating opportunities in hiding.”

“There’s always Tonks,” Harry suggested.

“I’m sure she would have asked already, Harry.”

“Oh.”

“Of course, you could always buy some concubines.”

“What? Why?”

“First, because if the Black Head of House has no wife or consort, he can designate the son of a concubine of his as heir. Second,

unlike legal marriage or the Consort Bond, you don't need anyone's permission to take a woman as a concubine, not even her own. You just buy her."

"Are you sure you're Hermione Granger?"

"Technically, Milord, I'm Lady Hermione Potter as of yesterday."

"And as of yesterday, you would have had nothing to do with a harem or me buying women! As of yesterday, you still thought binding elves to a family was evil!"

"And you told me yesterday that even if we disagree with the social order as it exists in our world, we should learn to take advantage of it."

"Still..."

"Preservation of the Potter and Black lines is important in the long term. It is also important to keep those estates out of Dumbledore's or Voldemort's hands. As heads of those two houses, you probably have votes in the Wizengamot. A House with an heir has more political pull than one without."

"Where did you learn all this?"

"The books Tonks left for me."

"Fine! I guess I'll consider this."

"Just trying to be practical."

"So you think I should get a concubine?"

"For the Black line, you should consider it."

"You read about those too?"

Hermione nodded.

“What do I need to know?”

“Where do you want to begin, Milord? The nature of the Bond, the economics of the trade or how you bond with one?”

“Nature of the bond first, I guess.”

“Well, as I said, it is a loyalty bond and all loyalty bonds are similar. The Concubine Bond differs from the Consort Bond in degree of free will retained by the bonded. As your Consort, I do retain a fair amount of free will. I can speak my mind in your presence. I can offer you my opinion on things. The bond prevents me from really getting into a row with you, but otherwise I can be my own woman in that regards. What it prevents is my ever being with another man, not that I mind at all. I will not want to and you can’t make me,” she added sticking her tongue out at him.

“I wouldn’t want to,” he replied. “What about another woman?”

“Only if I want to, you let me and the other woman is bonded to you as well. I can also refuse certain sex acts if I feel they may cause pain.”

“Like now ‘cause I made you sore?”

She nodded. “Course, if you ask for a blow job, I really have no excuses.”

“I’ll keep that in mind. Anything else?”

“No anal sex. That’s an exit, not an entrance as far as I’m concerned.”

“Anal sex?”

“Fucking me in the bum and not the pussy.”

“Guys do that to girls?”

“Some do. But I don’t want you doing that to me.”

“I hadn’t even thought about that.”

Hermione nodded and continued. “Anyway, the concubine lacks a significant amount of free will when in her Master’s presence. She will call you either Milord or Master unless you’re in public. She will not speak unless spoken to first. She will not speak her mind or give you her opinion’s or advice unless you tell her to. Even if you do, that permission only lasts until you withdraw it or she leaves your presence.

“In regards to sex, you can order her to do just about anything unless it would cause either of you serious harm. If you want her to have sex with another man or woman, whether she wants to or not, she will do it. You can even give another man what’s called ‘General Permission’ to her. The other man is effectively her second Master and can have her do just about anything, unless she’s with you. The other man cannot, however, whore her out as its called. Only you can do that. About the only thing you cannot order her to do is kill herself, a member of your family or to harm herself, a member of your family or you.”

“So basically she’s a slave.”

“If you treat her that way, yes. But close relationships between the Master and his concubine are not unheard of. Many treat them more like a wife, just that the concubine won’t complain, bicker or argue with him.”

“Anything else?”

“As your Consort, I am free to bear your children. In fact that is a nature of the bond and I will be compelled to get pregnant soon and probably often. Once I’ve born an heir, you can tell me to stop getting



knocked up, but not before. In all probability, I'll have our first child within the year.

"Birth Control?"

"Doesn't work now. Not until I've had a child. The only way we can avoid that is if we are apart."

"I can always refuse."

"Can you? If I asked you to fuck me right now, could you refuse?"

Harry thought about it. "I'm a teenage boy."

"Girls have been all but throwing themselves at you for a couple of years, Harry. How many have you shagged?"

"Aside from you? None. I - I never told you this, but that time Cho kissed me?"

Hermione nodded.

"Well, the reason I ran away was not because of the kiss, it was because of what happened after."

"What happened?"

"I didn't even touch her and when we broke apart she was naked. She begged me to...so I ran."

Hermione giggled. "Didn't run away yesterday."

"Yeah, well ... I wanted you to be with me that way. I - I was certain it would be special and ... and forever."

"Was it?"

Harry nodded.

“Thanks, Harry. It was special and forever for me too, and that was before we bonded.”

“So I can refuse then?”

“You can no more refuse me than I can refuse you,” Hermione said. “The Bond will see to it we have a child sooner rather than later. Oh, under certain circumstances we might be able to resist...”

“Such as?”

“Such as if we could not afford a child yet.”

“Don’t see that as a problem,” Harry moped.

“Or if we were going back to Hogwarts.”

“If what Tonks said about Dumbledore is true, don’t see that as an option.”

“Or if we are not safe...”

“If what she said about the wards here are true, that’s not the case.”

“Since all reasonable arguments against are not issues...”

“We are too young, don’t you think?”

“The nature of the bond does not see youth as an issue. If we are old enough to bond, we are old enough. And if there is not outside pressure that would discourage a child, the bond affects both of us. I am going to bear your child, Harry. Unless I am barren, I am going to be pregnant within the year. Our bond will bring us to that point and we will want to get there.”

“So this Consort Bond affects both of us?”

Hermione nodded. "I'd like to think we'd have been the perfect couple anyway. But soon we will be if we are not yet there already."

"Fine," Harry said. He hoped she was wrong, but knew he could not refuse Hermione her happiness. She had told him before she wanted to be his wife and have his babies and he had even told her father that was what he wanted from her, and that was before they had bonded. It was, however, a lot sooner than expected.

"And a concubine," Harry asked? "Is there a difference?"

"The Concubine can only get pregnant with her Master's permission. Even then, such permission is limited to his progeny. Even if she's having sex with other men in her bed at his command, only her Master can get her preggers."

"Interesting form of birth control," Harry observed. Hermione nodded in agreement. "Okay," Harry continued, "Tonks said Concubines are sold into slavery by their magical guardians. How does that market work?"

"A girl or woman can be sold into bondage at any time, even before they are born, even before they're even conceived."

"Really?"

"For example, I'm not pregnant - yet. But if you wanted to, you could sell an interest in a future daughter. That's usually a desperate act as there's no guarantee I'll ever have one. Those sales don't generate a lot of money. You could also sell the hypothetical daughter while I'm pregnant. Again, the contract would be worth more if you knew it was a girl.

"After the girl is born, they are worth more. There are then several categories of merchandise. Before the child reaches bonding age, when the woman has reached bonding age and can breed, and older woman who can no longer bear children. Young girls fall into two categories: the less valuable ones are girls who have not yet

expressed accidental magic. The reason is because it is illegal to sell a Squib. After they have proven to be witches, they're worth more.

"Girls who are of breeding age vary in price as well. A variety of factors effect the price. For example, girls who have not taken their O.W.L.s or whose results are unknown are worth less than those who have, generally. O.W.L.s are worth less than N.E.W.T.s. First time girls, those who are not already Concubines are worth more than used girls. Virgins are worth more than those who are not. It seems a fair few buyers will pay a premium to deflower their purchase. Later in life, girls who have proven to bear children are worth more than those who have not. Also, price varies on blood status. Muggle Borns are worth the least, Purebloods the most and everyone else is in between."

"So, if I buy a girl whose too young, for example, how does that work?"

"You get a magical contract called a 'Title of Interest.' It's keyed into her, but the magic lies dormant until she attains bonding age."

"Then what? I go pick her up? Someone delivers her?"

"Once she's of age, you can summon her to you using the contract," Hermione replied. "Same's true of all purchases. Once you've paid the price, it is the contract you initially receive, not the woman. You then can to summon her at your leisure."

"So once I buy her she's sort of like property?"

"Yes, Milord. You can sell her whenever you like, give her away as a present either for a short while or permanently. If you keep her and she out lives you, she will pass to your heir or as you spell out in your will."

"What about freeing her?"

"Not an option, Harry. Once a Concubine, always a Concubine. You can no more free them than you can free me from the bond."

Moreover, most Masters keep their Concubines even if they don't like or want them anymore."

"Why?"

"The loyalty bond. Once she's transferred to another master, she is no longer bound to you. She can betray you, hurt you or your family, betray your secrets to your enemies, as far as you're concerned, she's just another woman and to her you're just another man."

"Once I buy one, saying that I do so, what happens? Do they come here to live?"

"That's up to you. You can do that. Most Muggle Born witches wind up never seeing their families again. That's more by contempt and custom than anything else. But they can also live outside either with their parents or not. They will not be able to tell anyone what they are as that's considered your secret. Even if their parents know about the sale, and at least the father will, the status is a taboo topic in their homes. This can be useful as they effectively become your spies. If bought at auction, their parents would never know who bought them, only that they were sold."

"So, when does the bond attach? When I first summon them?"

"No. Like the Consort Bond, the final bond itself is the result of a sex ritual. You start by telling your new Concubine you own them. You're their Master, they're your Concubine. You tell them how you came to own them and then tell them you own them in mind, body, heart, soul and magic from this point until their death or sale. You then command them to take off their clothes and perform two sex acts with you: they must suck you off and they must have intercourse with you."

"Even if they don't want to?"

Hermione nodded. "The forming bond will compel compliance, even though their mind does not wish it."

"Sounds like rape," Harry grumbled.

“Under any other circumstances it would be.”

“And you’re saying I should do this to a woman?”

Hermione nodded. “The Black line needs an heir, Milord. I’d prefer it from a Consort, but...”

“Whomever she will be will hate me,” Harry moaned. “I don’t think...”

“Regardless of what you do to them, the Concubine Bond helps them get over it. They may not fall in love with their Masters, but they come to at least respect them and maybe like them. They almost always come to like the sex with their Masters.”

“One then,” Harry resigned. “For the Black line.”

“Actually,” Hermione said quietly, “you may want to consider more than one.”

“What?” Harry said in shock.

Hermione pushed the auction catalog over to Harry. It was the one that told them Dumbledore was going to sell her into slavery, a plan they foiled somewhat by accident and certainly not by design when they performed the Consort Bonding Rite. “Open it to the first Lot Number, Milord. You’ll see what I mean.”

Harry did as he asked. The entry shocked him.

HANNAH SUZANNE ABBOTT

Born May 16, 1980. MUGGLE BORN (Magical background seven generations back). Completed 5th Year Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. O.W.L.s pending and posting will be updated July 10. Vitals: 5’10”. Blonde hair, brown eyes, 38-25-36, 132 lbs. Bra size - D cup. Believed to be unspoiled.

Initial asking price: 200G

Seller 1276 (Dumbledore was written beside the number in pen)

Pre-Auction Bidding Interest Expressed:

Buyer 2132

Buyer 3690

Buyer 11710

In addition to her, there were several other Hogwarts students both Muggle Borns and not up for sale whose lives were about to take a drastic change for the worst in most cases: Katie Anna Bell, a teammate of Harry's on the Gryffindor Quidditch team; Cho Chang, whom Harry had dated briefly that year; arguably the two best looking girls in his year Parvati and Pamda Patil; and a former Gryffindor classmate who had not returned to Hogwarts following her Fourth Year named Sally Anne Perks. There were several other Hogwarts students for sale as well. Most were younger and were being sold probably to pay off a debt. The whole thing made Harry sick inside.

"You know you won't let this happen to them, Milord," Hermione whispered. "It's who you are! You can't save them from becoming Concubines, but you can save them from becoming slags or an old git's toy. You know you will try."

"Bloody 'People Saving Thing'," Harry agreed. "And you're okay with this?"

"Harry," she said quietly, "I know you would beat yourself up if you didn't try to help them. You would be miserable and that's not the Harry I want."

"Fine," Harry grumbled. "I'll consider it! Knowing my bloody luck, I wouldn't be a bit surprised to find out that I also inherited a Concubine or two from Sirius."

“It’s possible,” Hermione agreed. “He was a pureblood. He had no girlfriend that we know of and he most definitely is not gay.”

“How do you know?”

“He’d always sneak a peak at boobs, cleavage or girl’s bums.”

“Oh. I was worried maybe he tried something.”

“He may have been a bit of a rouge, but he was a gentleman. As Snuffles, however .. That dog was a perv!”

Harry actually laughed remembering an incident the previous summer when the dog Snuffles entered a bathroom just as Ginny was toweling off.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79).  
Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER  
6/23/96.



## CHAPTER NINE: SIRIUSLY OR SERIOUSLY

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 1996. Potter Manor.

Harry did not know whether his current predicament was amusing, disturbing or the beginning of a pattern. As soon as Hermione finished telling him about bonds and bonding rituals and suggesting he might need to consider taking on another Consort or a Concubine to ensure that he can legally have a blood heir to both Houses, she had then asked whether he still wanted her to suck him off. He told her he'd rather shag her senseless, but she was still a little sore. That being said, he offered to do her first. They soon found themselves naked, on the same reading bench in the same spot as they had been the day before when they had each relieved the other of their virginity. There was a long period of kissing, caressing and Harry sucking Hermione's breasts before Harry finally got between her legs to further explore her sex with his tongue.

She had only cum moments before and they had changed places. Harry was sitting on the bench and Hermione was kneeling between his legs and had begun licking his shaft as she had the day before. Harry noticed movement in his peripheral vision, his focus having been on watching his girl begin to pleasure him. Harry looked up and saw Tonks approaching and could not help but roll his eyes.

"Wotcher, you two," she said as she continued walking over to them. To Harry it seemed as if she had no idea that anything was going on. He looked down and saw Hermione had looked up and watched as Tonks sat next to them.

"Hi Tonks," Hermione said, again as if nothing unusual was happening.

"That's some wand you got there, Milord," Tonks added with a smile looking at Harry's fully aroused state.

"It is indeed," Hermione said with a giggle. To Harry's surprise, Hermione then took him into her mouth. The witch didn't care!

“Hermione?” Harry asked.

“Hmmm?” was all she could manage with her mouthful of him.

“You don’t mind Tonks being here?”

“Hm-mmm.” which Harry took correctly as a negative. Considering his most sensitive organ was in very close proximity to lots of teeth and that Hermione was not about to stop, there was little Harry could do but lean back and enjoy her efforts. Another Outstanding, he thought minutes later when he finished. Hermione was never one to merely Exceed Expectations and that was proving true about her ability to pleasure him as well.

As Hermione climbed into his lap for her cuddle, Tonks said: “Can’t leave you two alone without you two getting naked and going at it, can I?”

“You don’t have to watch, you know,” Harry said a little annoyed at the older witch.

“Ah, but it is entertaining. So much better watching you two than Muggle Porn. Your show yesterday gave me such wonderful wanking material for last night! Besides, it doesn’t look like the two of you mind.”

Harry and Hermione chuckled. Truth was he didn’t and ... “Having an audience turns her on,” he said.

“Guess she’s a frustrated actress or something,” Tonks chided.

“More like a horny, little slut,” Harry said, surprised that Hermione merely giggled in reply.

“More like a little of both,” Hermione whispered softly. “At least when it comes to Harry.”

“With that wand of his, I can see why,” Tonks said with a laugh.

“It’s not the size of the sea,” Hermione replied, “it’s the motion of the ocean.”

“And how is his ocean motion?”

“Unbelievable!” she sighed.

“Well, his sea size is impressive as well. Bigger and longer than average.”

“Really?”

Tonks nodded.

“Ooooh, I’m so lucky! Envy of all the girls!” Hermione cooed to Harry.

“Is that an ‘I shag the Boy-Who-Lived’ comment?” Harry asked jokingly.

“Honestly! No. It’s a ‘my man speaks softly, carries a huge sword, and knows how to use it to take me to heaven’ comment! I’d rather have ‘The Boy-Who-Can-Shag-Me-Senseless’ any day, or night for that matter.”

“Good to know.”

“Well,” Tonks said, “now that the two of you are good and shagged...”

“Actually,” Harry said, “compared to yesterday we have not yet begun to really shag!”

“Fine,” Tonks continued, “now that the Harry and Hermione show is in intermission, we need to continue our talk from yesterday. So, let’s head back over to the table and we can continue.”

Hermione and Harry dressed with some reluctance. It was a little difficult as her clothes were strewn about all over the place, as were Harry's.

"Forced to wonder," Harry mused, "would you have stopped had your parents walked in on us?"

Hermione looked at him and chewed her lip for a moment. "Before or after starting?"

"Both."

"Before, maybe. After, that's their problem."

"Really? How would they react?"

"Probably freak the first time. Then again, they never stopped when I walked in on them, so..."

"Really?" Harry was a bit surprised. As far as he knew the only evidence that his Aunt and Uncle had ever been even partially naked in front of each other, much less anyone else, was their son. Then again, Harry did know about artificial insemination so maybe that was not proof at all. He took his seat next to a relaxed yet naked Hermione.

"Okay, let's try and focus," Tonks said. "I'm hoping you can manage to keep your sword out of her scabbard 'til we get through this, Sir Shags-a-lot."

"I like that one," Hermione giggled. "Much better than The-Boy-Who-Lived, don't you think Harry? I promise to all but stop with the 'Milords' and 'Masters' if I can call you that all the time."

"Ugh!" Harry complained. "Until yesterday it was Sir Never-Shagged-At-All and now this?"

“Really?” Tonks asked. “He really must have the Ocean Motion thing going then. Most boys are bollocks at shagging at first.”

“And now,” Harry continued, “it seems it’s Sir Shagged-Too-Much...”

“What? Hermione?”

“Ten times yesterday,” Hermione said. “You saw shag number six. Oh and there was oral and hand before, so maybe it was an even dozen if they count. And two more oral later. I’m still a little sore and...” Hermione finally blushed Harry noted.

“And she has barred my basilisk from her Chamber of Secret since we woke up this morning,” he grumped, although he was somewhat faking it. She wasn’t the only one who over-shagged it, although he was hoping he had recovered faster.

Tonks got a laugh out of that one. “Oh you poor thing,” she giggled.

“My poor pecker, more like. Finally gets a romp and then cut off without so much as a by your leave? He’s pining!”

“Well, he can just pine some more ‘cause we have work to do. While those of us who want to help you want you to have some fun for once, there is also work to be done. And now it’s work time, not play with Hermione bits time.”

“Yes Ma’am,” Harry said in a false sulk. He knew given this chance he would have used this summer to work on getting rid of Voldemort. Now, he knew he had two dark bastards to deal with. He needed to work.

“Right then,” Tonks said. “Although I am ninety-nine percent certain Hermione here is your Consort, Lord Potter, we need to be totally certain.”

“And how do we know for certain?”

Tonks pulled a large, golden ring out. "This is the Ring of the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter. It is your seal, your family seal. There's a larger one in your office upstairs, but this will do as well. It can only be worn by the Head of your House. Your seals are magical. They cannot be faked, counterfeited, or forged. Place this on your right hand's forefinger. As you are Head of House by birthright, that's where it goes."

Harry did as he was told. There was a flash of what he was sure was magic just before the ring resized itself to fit his finger.

"Now touch the seal with your thumb, look at Hermione's neck and tell me what you see."

Harry nodded and did that as well. There was another flash and a gold ribbon appeared on her neck. Right in the middle, a silver scripted "P" was visible. "She's got - she's got a ribbon 'round her neck. It wasn't there before" he gasped.

"I can feel it!" Hermione exclaimed. "Can I see it?"

Tonks passed over a small mirror.

"It's," Hermione began with tears in her voice, "it's beautiful!"

"You can never take it off," Tonks said. "It will never dull or tatter. You will wear it forever, in this life and the next. It is a symbol of your bond to Harry, one which will only grow and never die."

"I seem to have read that," Hermione whispered. "Can you see it?"

"No," Tonks said. "I am not bonded to Harry. Only those who are can see it. Still, nothing prevents him from giving you tokens that do show the world what you mean to him."

"Such as," Harry and Hermione said.

“An engagement ring and a wedding ring,” Tonks replied. “Under our law, you two are married. You said the necessary vow for your bond and performed at least part of the rite before a witness - me.”

“We’re married?” Harry asked.

“Under our law,” Tonks said, “yes.”

“I wish,” Hermione’s voice hitched, “I only wish Mum and Dad could have been there...”

“What?” Harry replied. “Been there to watch me hide my basilisk in your chamber over and over?”

“Okay,” she huffed. “They just should have been here to know their little girl who had never had a friend before Hogwarts finally landed her handsome prince in hopes of living happily ever after. I will admit, the shagging might have been a bit much.”

“And the fact that you have all but begged me to buy a Harem,” Harry asked.

“I might be able to get them to handle that bit,” Hermione replied.

“How?”

“Simple. Many of them are our friends. All of them are decent young women. And I know even as a member of your Harem, as it were, they would be far better off than where they would be otherwise with you. That, and I know I will always be number one in your heart.”

“Still...”

“Harry’s Harem?” Tonks asked.

“My Consort - slash - wife looked through that catalog you showed us. There are friends of ours up for sale this year.”

“Half the Muggle Borns in our year at least,” Hermione added. A couple from the year ahead. All have Harry connections.”

“We figured as much,” Tonks replied. “the Old Man is selling off any Muggle Born witches whom Harry might take an interest in. He wants Harry to marry a Pureblood.”

“I convinced Harry to buy them,” Hermione continued. “If he can’t find a Consort for the Black line, he can always use one of them to produce the heir.”

“Wise move.”

“What about you, Tonks?” Harry asked. “Fancy a shot at consort? Lot harder to wear out two witches than only one,” he snarked.

“Having seen you in action, I can’t say I’m not tempted,” she replied. “Unfortunately, there are impediments which we will discuss later. Thanks for the offer though. It’s,” she hitched, “it’s more than anyone has offered before.”

“I mean it Tonks.”

“And I wish I could, Harry.”

“But...”

“No buts. I would be honored to, but can’t. I will tell you why and it has nothing to do with you, okay?”

“I suppose.”

“Right then. Next on the agenda is the will of your Godfather, Harry. I hope you are up for it.”

“I - I guess.” Oddly, aside from the night at Privet drive and his meeting with Dumbledore just after the battle that claimed the life of his Godfather, worrying about Hermione and then being with her had



pretty much been all he had really been thinking about. "I think I can manage."

"It's important," Tonks said skeptically. "His public reading is scheduled for the 10th of July. It was announced in the Prophet today."

"I assume that means something," Harry said in a dead voice.

"It means the Gringotts Goblins who handle probate estates have verified that the will is valid and can survive any challenge. It's final. The time is to allow those who must be there for the reading to make the necessary arrangements to attend."

"Including me I suppose."

"Actually no. You can skive off if you want."

"Why?"

"Read. After I will tell you."

Harry and Hermione were handed the parchment and began to read together.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT  
of  
SIRIUS ORION BLACK  
HEAD OF THE ANCIENT  
AND NOBLE HOUSE OF BLACK

6 June 1996

Where to begin? Bloody dictating quills! REMUS, you useless GIT, I said this was no bloody good!

Right then, where was I? I, Sirius Orion Black, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, being of sound mind, ... I heard that you fur ball! I am! Of sound mind you prat! ... hereby make this my last

Will revoking all prior Wills and codicils. How the bloody hell do I know what a codicle is? I'm not a bloody solicitor, Remus! Anyway - and hopefully without further interruptions ... With this Will to provide from my friends and to designate my Heir at law and magic.

I. I hereby attest that I currently have no children or other descendants, and it is not for a lack of trying. To my great friend, confidant and love of my life Mallory, I know you wanted children, I know we tried and we know it was me that was lacking in that department. We both know we don't know why. We both know it was not what we wanted. I would have been happy with nothing but daughters had they all turned out to be as wonderful as you. Whether it was my long sojourn at a certain recreational paradise courtesy of cock-sucking wizard morons, the Ministry of Magic (see prior clause) and Lord God Cock Sucker Himself (who currently is Chief Warlock), or whether it was my own family breeding within Pureblood lines one time too many, we will now never know. I'm sorry Mal. Just know that I love you and have for ages and would have grown old and grey with you by my side regardless.

Pffft!

Damn, Mal. I know you're just down the hall. But thinking of not being with you hurts!

II. R-right then. Specific Bequests!

A. To Mallory Michelle Grant, the love of my life and my wife in all but name for all these years:

1. A sum of 5,000,000 Galleons.
2. Title to 17A High Street, Hogsmeade. I purchased the flat. You may do with it as you please. Just remember, I can't give you our favorite summer place and you hated Grimmauld Place as much as I did. But I have fond memories of our times together in the one place I always thought of as ours and ours alone.
3. A request. Help the new Lord Black in all that he has to do.

B. To Remus John Lupin, last of the Marauders and last of my best mates:

1. A sum of 5,000,000 Galleons. Damn it man! Buy some decent clothes!
2. A wish that you continue forward with the plan!

C. To my Goddaughter Clarice Anne Potter:

I only knew you for a little over a month before that terrible night took your parents from us and sent me off to a “lovely” recreational paradise. I have know idea where you are. I hope my heir finds you and reunites you with your real family. In the event that he does, I leave you 5,000,000 Galleons in Trust to pay for your care and education through the end of you Seventh Year and eighteenth birthday. The remainder of the Trust shall be added to your main account of 10 Million Galleons upon your eighteenth birthday. Try not to spend it all at once.

D. To my Cousin, Andromeda Terra Tonks:

1. Reinstatement into the House of Black for you and your descendants.
2. A sum of 1,000,000 Galleons. You were always kind to me, Andy. Take care.

E. To my Cousin Bellatrix LeStrange:

You are hereby and forever banished from the House of Black. Your betrayal can never be forgiven or forgotten. I hereby annul your marriage and demand immediate repayment to my House of any curtsey any Lord Black paid to whore you off.

F. To My Cousin Narcissa Malfoy:

Should you ask, I shall expect my heir to annul your marriage as well. The Malfoys are the lowest form of scum and I cannot accept a woman as decent as you being associated with such vermin. But the

choice is yours to make. I also ask my heir, should you so decide, to take up position as your patron and provide for you. I would willingly have provided you with a monetary gift, but you got for brains husband and his useless son might benefit, so get the annulment!

G. To My Cousin Draco Malfoy:

You are a useless waste of air. If I could kill you, you and your waste of a father would be dead already. You are hereby disinherited and your name shall never more be associated with MY HOUSE!

H. To Nymphadora Tonks:

1. By restoring your mother, I've restored you.
2. 1,000,000 Galleons. I pray you find the happiness Mal and I could not.

I. To Albus Wulfric Percival Brian Dumbledore:

What potions were your parents taking when they named you? That should be considered child abuse! I leave you with what you deserve to hear. Upon further reflection, given a choice between you and Voldemort, I choose Voldemort! If I must live under a pureblood fancying, bigoted despot, I prefer one who holds himself out as one and not one who tries to look like a savior! You stole my family from me. I pray you suffer a long and agonizing death, you truly discover what fates are worse than death, and then you rot in hell!

J. To Arthur Weasley: 50,000 Galleons. You were always a friend.

K. To William Weasley:

1. 50,000 Galleons. You and that girl of yours deserve it.
2. Title to a nice little property called Shell Cottage. Call it an early wedding present!

L. To Fred and George Weasley, or is it Gred and Forge?

1. As heirs in spirit to the original Marauders, I leave you a journal we kept that records all of our pranks and how we did them. I trust I don't have to tell you to keep up the good work?

2. 50,000 Galleons each. Use it as you please, although your ingenious inventions are a sound investment in my opinion.

M. To Molly, Ronald and Ginevra Wealsey: A warning: Revenge is a dish best served cold.

N. To Hermione Jane Granger:

You are the brightest witch of your age. 100,000 Galleons. I'd leave you more, but as I'm certain a certain Lord Potter is your future, this is just to tide you over until the git pulls his head out of his ass and makes you his forever more!

III. The remainder of my estate, estimated at 105,675,000 Galleons and including all forms of property, real and personal, I leave to my godson, second cousin once removed and designated heir to all my titles, votes on the Wizengamot and any other properties I possess not otherwise bequeathed above: Lord Harry James Potter-Black, Heads of the Ancient Houses of Potter and Black and emancipated by separate instrument effective as of the day of my death. Lord Potter-Black is my heir at law and magic. In this document I make but one request of my heir: publish it! (You can redact the amounts of money, but the rest should be published!)

Sorry Cub. I didn't want to leave you. Our Society shall advise you on where to go from here.

IV. A few last words Cub. First, if you have not yet figured it out, most of us have. You are in love with a certain witch and she, even if she hasn't figured it out, is in love with you. Take care of her. Take care of your Hermione!

V. Second, there are several women who for various reasons are important to me. They were my friends or, in one case, the love of my life. Take care of Andromeda Tonks, her daughter Nymphadora, Narcissa Malfoy (hopefully Cissy Black again my cousin and friend as

once I knew her) and my wife in all but name Mallory Grant. In my mind, these women our my family and as the new Lord Black I ask that you take them in as your family as well.

“Bloody hell,” Harry said as he finished. “I’m ...”

“Rich?” Tonks asked rhetorically.

“Yeah.”

“Harry, you were rich once he emancipated you. The Potter estate is the largest in our world. His gift to you is almost nothing in comparison. The title, though, that’s another thing.”

“Hermione suspected that. Told me I had to plan to - er - keep the Black line going as it were.”

“Indeed. Any questions about any of the bequests before we move on?”

“Who was this Mallory Grant?”

“Sirius had been in love with her for years.”

“Yet they never married? Why didn’t he ever tell me? Why didn’t he introduce me to her?” Harry was starting to get angry.

“They never married because he got sent to Azkaban. He was never charged, but the Ministry never cleared him either. As an escaped fugitive, he could not marry. As to why he never told you? He would have this summer had he...” Tonks sniffed. “Had he lived. You would have met her too. Why not before? Sirius was holed up at Grimmauld Place or somewhere else ever since his escape. He couldn’t bring you to his other hideouts, the Old Man wouldn’t let him and he didn’t want Mallory anywhere near the Old Man or the other Order members. Aside from a handful of us, he didn’t trust them. But she does know about you, Harry.”

“Oh.”

“And you will meet her soon.”

“Fine. Did you know about her, Hermione?”

“No.”

“Okay. And what about Mrs. Malfoy? What’s that about?”

“Sirius was good friends with my Mum and Cissy as a child,” Tonks said. “He stayed friends with her right up until after his Fifth Year.”

“What happened then?”

“My Mum eloped with Dad and was cast out by Orion Black, then Head of the House of Black. Sirius had a huge fight with his Mum about it and was kicked out of his home. Cissy’s folks told her to stay away.”

“But this promise he made?”

“Cissy’s marriage was arranged. She didn’t want it at all. Even though my Mum was cast out, Cissy still sees her on the sly. She hates the man and has grown to hate the boy as well. Shortly after she fulfilled her obligations as a Malfoy wife - after that snot Draco was born - she arranged a meeting in secret with my Mum and Sirius. She asked Sirius to annul her marriage once he became Head of the family. He told her he would.”

“Why didn’t he? He was the Head of the Blacks, right?”

“As far as the Goblins are concerned, which meant as far as the Black’s money and property were concerned, yes. He was never disowned and never convicted of a disqualifying crime. But the annulment is governed under Wizard law. The Ministry still considered him an outlaw and would never have honored the annulment. Not that it mattered. As far as I know, Cissy had not

spoken to Sirius since he escaped. I do know that she was crushed when the lies spread and were believed about Sirius being a Death Eater. She hates them.”

“Um, okay.”

“What will you do, Harry?” Hermione asked.

“If she asks, I’ll honor the promise in the Will,” Harry replied.

“Here Harry,” Tonks said handing him another ring. “Having read the Will, this is yours now. It goes on your left forefinger.”

“The Black Ring?”

Tonks nodded.

“He’s - he’s really gone then,” Harry commented as he fought not to lose the battle against his tears. Hermione wrapped her arms around him and placed her head on his shoulder and the battle, while not won, was put on hold. “Thanks,” he whispered to her as he slipped the ring on. There was another flash of magic as the ring resized.

“You are now, in the eyes of magic,” Tonks began, “Lord Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter and Lord Black, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black. Lord Potter-Black for short,” she added with a small smile. “With those titles comes responsibility for both houses.”

Harry snorted. “Hermione told me. I got to get her preggers and then find a girl to knock up for the Black line.”

“A little crude, but accurate.”

“It’s okay,” Harry said somewhat disappointed. “Looks like I’m back to Plan B.”

“Plan B?” Tonks asked.



“Get a Concubine and knock her up instead,” Harry moped a little.

“And if there’s more than one?” Hermione asked reminding Harry of their discussion about the upcoming auction.

“First one to bear a son wins the prize, I guess,” Harry said. “What if...”

“Yes?” the two young women asked.

“Well, just thinking here,” Harry said. “Let’s say I do get a concubine or some concubines. Let’s say one of them bears a son, okay?” The two women nodded. “Okay, and say sometime later, I get a Consort for House Black. If she bears a son, what happens?”

“That boy becomes the heir,” Tonks said.

“And the other? What about him? What becomes of him?”

“He remains your son so what happens to him is up to you. Just ‘cause he’s no longer and heir doesn’t mean he’s no longer your son.”

“Is there a stigma associated with the children of concubines?”

“No. Not because of what there mother’s bond is at any rate. Any stigma would be based on their blood status. If the boy’s mother was a pureblood, he would be less looked down upon than if his mother was a Muggle Born.”

“ Makes no sense if you ask me,” Harry said. “Hypothetically speaking, if Hermione gave me a son and a half blood concubine gave me a son, then the fact that Hermione’s social station is actually higher means nothing? Her boy is tainted by her parents while the concubine’s is not tainted by his mother’s status?”

“Sums it up in a nutshell,” Tonks said. “As I told you last night, our society is messed up and has been for centuries. As I understand it from Sirius, who hated the system on so many levels, your Mum was brilliant, funny, a joy to be around, and drop dead gorgeous. Yet to avoid being auctioned off as a concubine solely because of what her parents were, she had to bind herself to your father as his Consort. Yet a fair few of the true wives in upper society are pureblooded, dim witted, ugly toads and dumb as posts and never feared being sold.”

“You’re talking about Umbridge?”

Tonks nodded. “Maiden name Selwyn. Barely scraped an O.W.L. and only in subjects that had nothing to do with wands or magical creatures. She never passed a N.E.W.T. The Selwyns were an old Pureblood line that was rapidly approaching Squib levels with each successive generation. She was married off at nineteen to Krakas Umbridge, then aged 97. His family was wealthier and more politically connected, but socially lower on the scale. It was through the old geezer that she got her foot in the door at the Ministry. He kicked off a few years later. They never had a child. Rumor is by then she had turned herself from a filing clerk to the assistant to an up and comer in the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures named Cornelius Fudge. Fudge was and is married, but his wife refuses to suck him off. Umbridge had no such reluctance and rose through the ranks of the ministry on her Fudge cock sucking skills alone.”

“Now there’s a disturbing thought,” Harry said, “on so many levels.”

“Rumor is she’s pissed as hell now.”

“Why?”

“Someone took her place as top Fudge sucker while she was at Hogwarts this year.”

“Who?”

“You’ll never guess.”

“Percy Weasley?” Hermione suggested.

“Why do you say that?” Harry asked.

“Before the falling out, Molly was certain he and his main squeeze Penelope Clearwater were going to get married.”

“So?”

“So? She’s in the auction book as a used property!”

“You’re saying she’s a concubine?”

“Bound since the summer of ‘91 - as in the summer Percy and she became prefects and an item.”

“So what your saying is?”

“Percy’s light in the loafers, despite his arrogant demeanor. Someone bought him a girl for appearances sake. Now that he’s doing the Minister, he’s selling the excess baggage.”

“Sick. But unfortunately your logic is hard to ignore.”

“Rumors are she’s spot on,” Tonks said. “Even with his academic credentials, he should be nowhere near where he is today. Nobody’s that bloody good. So, the conclusion is he has other talents.”

“And what do you think?” Harry asked.

“Percy is a greedy bastard. I have no reason to believe he bats bludgers from the other side. He’s a toadie. That’s what Fudge likes around him. People who think anything the fat bastard says is brilliant. But, we do know Percy Weasley has a habit.”

“Bad one?”

“Gambler. Remus is the one looking into the Stud Book as the auction catalog is called. Clearwater was bound in ‘90. Summer of ‘91, she’s transferred to a new owner - the current owner. We also know from Bill, Percy had a really good night playing cards that summer although no one knows what that really meant. Percy and Penelope were a major item at school the rest of their time there. Now she was a concubine. She could not be an item with anyone other than her Master or someone her Master ordered her to be with.”

“Which do you think it was?” Hermione asked.

“It’s pure speculation.”

“Shoot.”

“Percy has a problem with the cards. But he never had the money to really have a problem. There’s no proof he’s gay. We Auror’s have sources and he’s not on the lists. That leaves she was sent after him by her Master.”

“For what purpose?”

“Again supposition. Fudge hates the Weasleys. That is a fact. No real reason. He hates them ‘cause he can. So, how to stick it to them?

“Can’t sack Arthur. First off, he does his job well. Secondly, he’s in the Order. Finally, you’re not supposed to sack low level employees for their political beliefs. So how to discredit the line? Buy Arthur’s most gullible and greedy son a concubine to keep him occupied and then find a way to generate a credible rumor he’s gay. The fact he’s not married to her suggests that. The fact that he’s selling her even more so.”

“So Fudge is trying to discredit the Weasleys?” Harry asked.

Tonks shrugged. “Politics in our world can be dirty. Fudge also hates the Old Man. The Weasleys are allied with the Old Man. Paint them as something less than savory, as in having a gay son, and the Old

Man takes the hit as well. The all wise Dumbledore being close with a family with at least one poof? That doesn't play well in the parlors of the elite. Pure politics. Discredit the Old Man to keep your fat useless ass in office.

"Then again, the Old Man is a real threat. We should embrace anything that knocks the prick off balance."

"So this is all petty ass, school yard bull?" Hermione asked. "And you're saying we should exploit it?"

"Yes, it's bull. And yes, if we can we should exploit it. But quietly. The Wizarding World in Britain is in total chaos. You got two Dark Wizards and their followers going at it. One is in control of the government: the Old Man. One is in open war against it: Voldie. In the political middle is the Ministry: Fudge. The bastard wants to take the Old Man down and wants to believe Voldie is gone for good. His government is riddled with spies and saboteurs from both Dark Wizards. His idea for Voldie is to hope that by not doing anything the problem will go away. We think he's taking a more direct approach on the Old Man. The Old Man and Voldie want you dead. Fudge wants to as a symbol and to keep his job.

"In the middle is you, Harry. Beset on all sides by enemies, you are right now in a mad position. Undermining them swiftly and quietly is the best course of action. Then again, that is my thinking."

After a pause, Harry had a thought. "And one way to stick it to the Purebloods and the Old Man in particular is to accept a Muggle Born as Consort to the Head of an Ancient and Noble House?"

"Actually, you're a Potter. That's what Potters have done for generations," Tonks said. "Your mother was a Muggle Born Consort as was your grandmother and nine of the ten Lady Potters before her. Only your Great-grandmother Dorea broke from that tradition.

"But, by naming a Half Blood relative with a - er - taste for Muggle Born witches as the head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black?

A House that can claim at least ten generations of Pureblooded Lords and Ladies? That will cause a ruckus. And, should the new Lord Black's heir be born of a witch with less than Pureblood, so much the better."

"Glad to hear I am part of Potter tradition," Hermione chuckled.

"Now," Tonks said, "furthering his great prank on the Purebloods, once we had reached this point in our discussions, Sirius asked me to give you this." She handed Harry an envelope. "Remus and I have seen it. We were there when he wrote it. But he wanted you to learn what's in there from him."

Harry opened the letter and he and Hermione began to read:

June 10, 1996

Dear Harry:

I hope you never have to read this letter. But I feel it is necessary just in case. Things are coming to a head real soon. Voldemort has a plan going forward that he will implement any day now. That plan is a trap for you. I've tried calling you on your mirror, but you haven't answered. Dumbledore promised me he would warn you, but I am guessing that will never happen.

If you are reading this, the trap was sprung, you somehow survived and I did not. I am sorry, Harry. We had wonderful plans for you this summer and for once I would have been able to be the godfather you so richly deserve.

Enough of the mushy stuff.

Remus and Tonks have been designated the Executors of my Estate. For all practical purposes, Remus is lead on this as well as the Potter Estate. But due to his furry problem, he needs someone else to sign any legal papers or contracts, which is what Tonks will be doing until all transfers are complete.

If you are reading this, then a lot of things have happened, hopefully very quickly. The following things should have occurred (in no particular order):

1. You're now living at Potter Manor, where you should have been living all of these years.

2. Hermione Granger is with you there. If she is, Hi Hermione! Sorry about sending your parents away. They should not be gone nearly as long as you or they think. The idea was to get them and you out of harm's way.

3. You've been told all about Dumbledore, the real one and not the charlatan you've known and trusted all these years.

4. You've been told about his plans for you and for Hermione and I hope you are as pissed as I am. You've been told about the traitor Weasleys and their part in this plan.

5. You've read the fake and the real Will of your father.

6. You know about your sister. Hopefully, Remus has found her.

7. You've been told about and no doubt Hermione has read all about certain bonds. The two most important are the Consort and Concubine Bonds.

8. You and Hermione are now Husband and Consort. If you are not, I ask why? I know you love her even if your too thick to realize it. She loves you, Harry. She's confided in Tonks and me about this. She loves you with everything that she is. If she offers to be your Consort and you refuse, I must ask why?

I think I know. You're afraid. You're afraid she'll get hurt or worse. You're afraid you won't survive this mess and leave her heart broken. Don't blame you. But, if you refuse to live your life just because the times are dark, the enemy has already won. Bond with her. Knock her up as soon as you can and have a family!

9. You've read my will and know you are now legally an adult.

10. You've also learned that someone (the Old Man) has illegally bound your magic. We have a friend who can help. She's a Healer and as part of her specialty deals with this sort of stuff. But, it will probably take time. As the bindings are removed, listen to her and to Remus and Tonks about using magic. While you can use your wand without restriction now - as can Hermione - it needs to be supervised until you get used to each increase in your power.

Hopefully, all the above has been revealed and your wearing your Potter and Black Rings with your Consort Lady Hermione Potter by your side. Now for my final "prank!"

My will probably left you with as many questions as answers. I'm sure Tonks did her best to avoid spilling all the beans. First off, I was serious (and not Sirius) about Narcissa. I promised my old friend to annul her marriage to that goon. If she asks, do this for her. (In case you're wondering, if you annul her marriage, she's never been a Malfoy and Draco has no mother or claim to the Malfoy Estate unless his father made out a will naming him as Heir. He's a true Pureblood prick, and probably never made one. Hence, Draco will be left knutless!)

Second and most importantly. I left you the bulk of everything I own. It's not listed. It doesn't have to be. Two "items" I own are very, very important to me and I want you to take care of them. You see, Pup, I have two lovely women in my life. They were given to me by my father on my fourteenth birthday. One was old enough at the time, the other would not be for many years.

Yes, Harry. I have two Concubines.

Mallory Michelle Grant is a few years older than me. She and I have been best of friends and lovers for twenty-two years. To me, she is my wife in all but name. We were trying to have a family together, but we found out that something is wrong with me and I cannot have children. We do not know if I was born with this problem or if it is a result of my stay at Azkaban. I ask this of you, Harry. Bind her to you as your own. She's yours by inheritance. I also ask you to give her what I could not: children.



Nymphadora Tonks is the younger of my two lovelies. She too is a lovely person and I ask you to bind her to you and to give her a family too when she's ready.

Kiss them both for me.

And kiss that wonderful witch of yours as well.

Sirius Orion Black.

"Oh bugger," Harry said as he finished the letter.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, age 15 (born 7/31/80) Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER 6/23/96.

## CHAPTER TEN: NYMPHADORA

MONDAY, JUNE 24, 1996. Potter Manor.

“So that means you’re my c-conubine?” Harry asked.

“Not yet,” Tonks said. “Not until we bond.”

“How - how do we do that?”

“Same way as the first time,” Hermione answered. “You have to claim her as your concubine, then order her to suck you off and have sex with you and once that’s done, she’s bonded. Every transfer is a kind of re-enactment of the first breaking.”

“Oh,” Tonks almost purred, “it definitely won’t be anything like my first bonding.”

The two teens looked at her.

“For one thing, I’m three inches taller than I was then. And these 38D’s could never fit into my old training bra.”

Hermione’s jaw dropped in shock. “When were you first bonded? How old were you?”

“It was the night I got home from my Second Year,” Tonks replied. “It was about three weeks before my thirteenth birthday.”

“But that’s not possible! Sirius only escaped three years ago!”

“Obviously, Sirius didn’t break me in,” Tonks deadpanned.

“Who did?”

“Break you in?” Harry added confused.

“The first time a witch is bonded to a Master as a Concubine, they call the bonding rite ‘breaking in the witch.’ In many cases, as in mine, the young witch has never been with a man before. I hadn’t even learned about that stuff yet. I thought witch Concubines were fictional. Needless to say, it was terrifying.”

“Who? How?”

“Why?” Hermione added. “How did you become a concubine?”

“Ladies first,” Tonks smirked. “It was not until years later after Sirius escaped capture that I learned how I became what I am. I assumed my father sold me for some reason. But I did not know when or why or anything. Even though I continued to live with them after I was bound, I could not ask him and he never said why this happened to me.

“I was sold as a futures contract in March of 1974, three months before I was even born and just a few days before Sirius’s fourteenth birthday. My father had gotten into debt and sold me to pay it off. I was sold to Sirius’s father. It was at about that time that the then Lord Black also bought Mallory. Mallory and I were presents for Sirius’s fourteenth birthday. Of course, I would not be of bonding age for some time. I guess Sirius’s dad bought me - well - in part to stick it to my dad for marrying my Mum and in part because by the time I reached bonding age, he thought his son might have tired of Mallory.”

“That’s so wrong,” Hermione thought aloud.

“Mallory is older than Sirius,” Tonks shrugged. “Orion Black gave her to Sirius the Saturday after his fourteenth birthday. He also gave his son and heir the Interest in Title to me and a flat in Hogsmeade where Sirius could enjoy his new toy away from Prefects and Faculty at school. At the time, Sirius was a Third Year and Mallory a Sixth Year.”

“That still doesn’t explain,” Harry began.

“After a few months of enjoying Mallory’s company,” Tonks continued, “he decided to let a couple of his friends in on the fun. Remus and James were given permission to Sirius’s concubines.”

“James, as in my father?” Harry asked in disbelief.

Tonks nodded. “James and Remus were regulars for years. James stopped when he became boned with your mother. Remus, however, continued to enjoy Mallory for a time.”

“Why?” Hermione asked.

“He’s a werewolf. No witch will have him. Even if one wanted to, the law forbids him to marry or have children. His - er - physical needs as a man restrict him to Muggles, female werewolves or being allowed access to a concubine.”

“And what about Pettigrew?”

“As far as I know, Pettigrew knew nothing about Mallory or his friends nighttime rendezvous with her at school. At least with this dirty little secret, he could not be trusted.”

“Would have done us a world of good if that lack of trust extended to more than just concubines,” Harry complained.

“Indeed. Anyway, Remus continued to enjoy access to Mallory for a few more years. Sirius withdrew his permission a few months before he was sent off to Azkaban.”

“Why?”

“Sirius knew he was in love with her and wanted to have children with her.

“Anyway, Remus knew that there was another out there. He also knew she was too young. The Interest in Title was in a drawer in a desk in the house Remus and Sirius shared here on the Potter Estate.

The contract lacked the name of the girl and it would only appear when the girl reached bonding age. Remus lived here for a long time after everything happened. So, once a month or so he'd check the contract. Finally, in the spring of 1987, there was my name on the parchment. He knew he could now summon me."

"It was the Saturday after I returned home for the summer holidays following my second year when it happened. I was in my room and dressed for bed that night when I suddenly found myself somewhere else. I was terrified! There I was in another bedroom with a man at least twice my age. He was good looking and had a kind face, but still. I screamed and wanted to run for it but could not move.

"It was Remus. He knew my name, which scared me even more because I never met him before. He told me his and then told me I was a slave. I knew what that was and refused to believe him. He told me the slave rules, but allowed me to talk. I still refused to believe. He told me to undress. I wanted to say no! I wanted to refuse. I stripped. I stood there, naked. He walked around me with a smile. He asked how old I was. I told him. He asked if I was a virgin. I was and told him. He asked if I had kissed a boy before. I had not and told him. He then told me he was going to kiss me.

"I didn't want him to, but I couldn't move! I was shorter then by about foot. He seemed to tower over me then. He put his hands on my bare back and pulled me to him. I could feel the bulge in his pants, although I didn't know what it was - my parents had yet to talk to me about those things. He told me to look at him and I did even though I didn't want to. He kissed me on the lips. My mind wanted him to stop. He told me to kiss back. My mind didn't want to. My body kissed him back. He picked me up by the waist so I was eye level with him. He told me to put my arms around his neck. My body complied. Wrap my legs around his waist. Mind screams no! Body complied. One of his hands held and caressed my bum, the other my back. He told me to kiss him. Mind NO! Lips YES! He told me to let him stick his tongue in my mouth and to do the same to him. Mind Eeew! Body complied. We snogged like that for a while. I couldn't stop! He did and asked me if I wanted more? Mind NO! Body and voice YES!

“Moments later, he was sitting on the bed and told me to sit on his lap with my back to him. I was terrified but complied. His hands began rubbing my belly, sides and thighs slowly. He kissed my neck, shoulders and cheeks. He asked if I wanted more. My mouth said yes. My body leaned my head back to allow him to kiss my lips. As his tongue soon entered to find mine waiting, his hands touched my breasts. My mind screamed in terror, my body moaned in pleasure as he gently played with my budding breasts and nipples. More? Mind NO! Body begged him. His right hand spread my legs wide apart. My body and voice begged him for more! I was dripping. His fingers touched me! Mind went into overdrive wanting it all to end, voice begged him for more and more and more. I could feel something building, something my mind did not want but my body and voice begged to have. He slipped a finger into me! I begged him for more. He slipped a second one in and I came! I begged him not to stop as I came! He left me panting and spent as he placed me on the bed.

“He stood and looked at me. He wanted to know if I wanted more. Mind NO. I asked him if there was more. There was, he told me. I begged him for more. He told me to lay back on the bed and spread my legs. My body complied. He then lay on top of me, gently. I felt that bulge again. He kissed me! Snogged me senseless and every time he broke the kiss my voice begged for more. He was sucking my new breasts. I was moaning and begging for more. His kisses moved down my body. MORE! His tongue and lips found my pussy. MORE! I couldn't think any more. I wanted more! MORE! My hips thrust his face. I was in heaven and then - HUGE ORGASM!

“When I opened my eyes, he had gotten off the bed. He was looking at me. He asked me if I enjoyed that. My mind was crying. My face smiled. My voice told him I did. Did he make me happy? Yes! Did he make me feel pretty? YES! Did I want more? GODS YES, PLEASE? Did I want to make him feel happy too? Can I? Yes! He told me to sit on the edge of the bed. I did. He told me to pull down his pants. Mind - NO WAY. Body? I was soon staring at that bulge. I never had seen a cock before. I thought it was HUGE! To be honest, Harry's is bigger.

“He told me to touch it. I did. Stroke it. I did. Lick it and stroke his balls. I did. Mind wanted nothing to do with this. Body begged him for

more and mouth told him, pleaded with him to let me make him happy. Take him into my mouth! No teeth. Lips and tongue. In and out but not all the way out! Deeper, deeper! Deeper until he was all the way in and out. Faster. I did all that. I knew nothing about what I was doing to him or what the result was. He told me I was beautiful and wonderful! He gave me no warning and came in my mouth. I almost gagged, but I kept sucking until there was nothing left of his come or his erection and he told me to stop. Without being told, after I let his cock go, I kissed it and said goodnight.

“He told me I could wake it up if I wanted more. Body did. How? He gave me ideas. He asked if I wanted it inside of me. It was before? No the place that makes you feel good. Mind NO! Body yes! Voice begged him like I used to beg Mum for candy. He was soon hard. He warned me it might hurt. Don’t care, I told him. I told him I wanted all of him in me NOW! He was over me and I grabbed his cock and pulled it to me. It DID hurt and I screamed! But voice said MORE! The pain soon went away and I had two orgasms before he finally came in me. As he lay on top, mind said RAPE. My voice asked if we could please, please, please do it again. We did. Three more times. He then sent me home and promised MORE later.

“My mind and body cried to sleep that night. But I did want more. We has sex the next night, and next and next and I stopped caring about the fact that it was wrong. For the next several years, I sucked and fucked him every day except the days around his werewolf time - which I knew nothing about - or when he was out doing something for Dumbledore, which was not too often. I loved fucking him and sucking him off repeatedly.

“I looked forward to it. I masturbated dreaming about it, even though I knew I’d be getting laid only hours later. I even masturbated in class!”

“No way!” Hermione said.

“I did. He worked out a way to get me from school every night and most weekends. We had a pre-arranged time when I would go to the loo and he would summon me for his pleasure and I had a way to let

him know it there was an issue - like overdue homework or detention or such. Still, I got shagged a lot! I lived for his cock! It's a slave thing. I soon didn't care that I was a slave."

"It's a wonder you got any studying done," Hermione said.

"Oh, but I did. I also had a wonderful tutor who helped me stay ahead in classes."

"Who?"

"Remus, of course. Learned loads from him. Probably would not have been able to become an Auror without the tutoring he gave me, especially in potions."

"Potions?" Harry asked. "But he taught defense."

"There are few courses at Hogwarts he's not capable of teaching effectively. Defense is his strongest, but he also has earned certifications in Potions, Charms, Transfiguration, Arithmancy and Runes."

"Then why was it Snape who made his Wolfbane Potion?"

"Remus could make it," Tonks admitted. "But Snape has access to the ingredients. As a Werewolf, Remus cannot legally purchase certain restricted potion ingredients, including the key ingredients in that potion and Snape, of course, is not one to just give them away. Remus and I believe it was Snape being the vindictive prat he is."

"Oh."

"In addition to being his pecker playpen, I also helped Remus with this various projects as often as I could. While I was still in school, this was mostly research and double checking his own research. After I left and entered the Ministry, I was stealing copies of classified Ministry documents for him and later for Sirius."



“What projects?” Harry asked. “What documents.”

“ When I was first bonded, Remus was working with your grandfather and had been for years. Remus knew you and your sister were supposed to go to him if your parents, Sirius and the Longbottoms could not take you and that your Grandfather was to be your magical guardian if Sirius was unavailable and of course this had not happened.

“He was trying to find you, your sister, and the copy of your father’s real Will that Sirius had hidden somewhere for safe keeping. He also was researching the laws about adoption, wills and guardianships to find out what if anything could be done. Until I started training as an Auror, he had done almost all he could have done and was left to scouring the country in hopes of getting lucky and bumping into you or your sister. Once I started training as an Auror, I learned about the Ministry Archives and once I became an Auror, I could search those archives and copy documents without being questioned. That’s how we got a copy of the false will. It was also from those archives that we learned that Sirius had been imprisoned without a trial and had never been tried.

“That was odd, because after Voldemort was defeated the first time, all the Death Eaters in custody who had not been tried were. All but one. All but Sirius.

“When Sirius escaped from prison, we didn’t know what to think. But, it was the reason Remus accepted the position at Hogwarts as whatever was happening probably had something to do with Harry and we then knew Harry was a student. We also hoped we could find out where Harry was living when he was not at school.

“Funny thing that year was.”

“How so?”

“ Everybody was looking for Sirius. The Ministry, Dumbledore, Remus, we all were looking for him. Yet Remus and I never thought to look in the obvious place.”

“Where?”

“Here. Sirius spent that year here at the Estate when he was not out looking for you and Peter Pettigrew. He and Mallory were living in the same house here that they had lived in before it all happened and Remus and I knew that house quite well. It’s where Remus lived right up until your grandparents died and its where I came to be with him when he first summoned me.

“We didn’t know what to think about Sirius. Everyone believed he was guilty and was a mad killer. But we had learned that he had never been tried and didn’t know what to think. I spent a lot of time in the Archives looking for answers and found some documents that suggested all was not as it seemed. Still, until Remus and Sirius finally met, until you two finally exposed Pettigrew, we had no idea what the truth was. Needless to say, when I found out my true Master was not the evil mass murderer but the victim of a cover up, well I made it a point to demonstrate everything Remus had taught me and I like to think I gave him a shag he remembered to his final day and beyond.”

“Did you love him?” Hermione asked.

“Who?”

“Either of them.”

“I was quite fond of them both. Remus more so than Sirius as I had known him longer. And they were quite fond of me too. But, no. It wasn’t love at least not the romantic kind,” Tonks said with a sigh. “That kind of love can develop between a Concubine and her Master. But Remus was never my Master and Sirius was already in love with Mallory, so I just had to accept my role in their lives. It wasn’t too bad. I did get a lot of shag time and they were both good lovers.

“Then again, at least Sirius let Mal and me draw the line at one of his more disgusting sex ideas.”

“What was that?”

“He wanted to do us as Snuffles.”

“Eww!” Hermione complained. “He wanted you to have sex with a dog?”

“Not really,” Tonks said. “He wanted to change into his dog form and then have sex with us. Kept saying the poor pooch was still a virgin and even a mangy ol’ mutt deserves a shag every now and then. Even though it would have been Sirius in the form of a dog, neither Mal or I wanted anything to do with that. Fortunately, Sirius never ordered us to. He probably could have had he really wanted to.”

“What about your metamorphagus abilities?” Harry asked.

“What do you mean?”

“Can you change your appearance into - say - Hermione? I mean for sex purposes.”

“Harry,” Hermione chided. “Why would she do that?”

“” Just thought it might be fun to have sex with two Hermiones is all.”

“Harry,” Hermione growled.

“Okay, I just have noticed that she doesn’t do that stuff anymore.”

“Oh. Well, it’s a good question then. Can you still do that? I mean, I noticed too, but I assumed it was because of what happened to Sirius.”

“Oh no,” Tonks said. “I admit, losing him hurt. I was fond of him and considered him a true friend. But I am quite capable of transforming. You will find your closet filled with new clothes for the both of you and

they are, I assure you, perfect fits. I was able to transform into body sizes that matched each of you perfectly.”

“Perfectly?” Harry asked. “As in a boy?”

“The trousers are tailored, Harry.”

“What’s that mean?”

“That means they are made to order,” Hermione began.

“It also means the tailor needs to know if you dress left or right.”

“What? What does that mean? Why’s that matter?”

“All boys learn at an early age they dress either left or right even if they don’t know it. It means which pants leg you put your bits down when you dress. You dress left, Harry.”

“How do you know?”

“It was rather obvious the night I came to get you which side of your boxers your bits were hanging.”

“Oh.”

“So I still have my abilities. But somehow the bond prevents me from using them in private with you. I don’t know why. I was never able to change for either Remus or Sirius. I won’t be able to for you either.”

“In private?” Hermione asked.

“When I am alone with Harry,” Tonks said. “And by alone that means with Harry and you and any other woman Harry is bonded to. If someone is here who is not bonded to Harry, I can use my abilities.”

“That explains how you could do it when we were at Grimmauld Place last summer. Even though Sirius was there, there were always others.”

“Correct. If there are others present not bound to my Master, I retain all my abilities. Same is true, it is said, for animagus transformations. If I were one, I would not be able to do that in private. Likewise, I cannot use a disillusionment charm. There are those who believe - no proof mind you - that Concubine Bond creates an inhibition of certain skills that could be used to deceive or hide from a Master. There is a reported exception where those skills prove necessary to protect the Master and his family. But that’s neither here nor there.”

“But, doesn’t the Bond inhibit those inclinations anyway?” Hermione asked.

Tonks nodded. “The reason for the inhibition is not truly known.

“Now, your rings, Milord.”

“My rings?”

“They are more than just your portable official House Seal. They are also the tool you can use to summon me or any of your bound women. They act as an emergency portkey, programmable portkey, and point to point portkey, although they are not truly port keys. With these rings, you can travel to and from any location you know of instantaneously. Your women can travel to you when summoned and also to you when they need to. You can also travel to them even if you have no idea where they are. But the travel is not like a portkey. You seem to transfer from one location to another instantaneously. The collar Hermione wears - and me too for that matter - have similar properties.”

“Is that how you brought me here?”

Tonks nodded. “I can use it just like a portkey to bring people with me, provided I am either bonded to them, their House or they are trusted and trustworthy friends of my Master or his House.”

She explained that all he had to do was rub the seal on the ring to activate the device. Harry did as he was told on the Potter ring and the seal disappeared. It was replaced by a gold surface. On the right side of the gold surface was a deep blue gemstone. On the left were the initials "HJP" carved into the gold. She asked Hermione if she was born in September. When Hermione confirmed that she was, Tonks explained that the gem was the birth gemstone for the woman the new rings represented. For Hermione, the stone was a sapphire. The initials were for her name, in this case Hermione Jane Potter. As Consort, Hermione was his wife and entitled to his name.

Harry repeated the process with the Black ring. This time, the surface was not gold but black with a small, scarlet colored stone on the right and the initials "MMG" inlaid in gold to the left. The black surface was onyx, symbolizing that the woman was a Concubine and not a Consort. Again, the gem was her birth stone, in this case a garnet for a woman born in January. Tonks told him the woman was Mallory Michelle Grant. He was then asked to rub the Black ring again and again it changed. It had the same black surface, but a brilliant red stone and the initials "NT" in gold inlay. This was Nymphadora Tonks summoning ring. The stone was a ruby for her birth month in July. When Harry rubbed the Black ring a third time, the Black seal reappeared. Both Harry and Hermione thought this was really interesting magic.

To use the ring as a personal transport device, all Harry had to do was touch the House Seal with his wand and think of the destination. The same was true for Hermione, although all she had to do was touch her collar with a finger. To summon one of the women, Harry had to select their seal and do the same thing while thinking the word "Summon." He could also go to them by thinking "find." The same was true for Hermione's collar. Hermione, however, was only linked to Harry. Harry was linked to all women bound to him.

Absently, Harry rubbed the Potter ring and noted as Hermione's seal vanished and was replaced not by the Potter Seal, but by another seal. It had a black face, a violet stone and the initials "MGM" in gold.

"Wh-what's this?" he asked. "What's this mean?"

Tonks looked at the new seal. "What do you think it means?" she asked.

"That there's a Potter Concubine?"

"It would seem so, Milord."

"But how? I don't have a Concubine."

"No, not yet," Tonks agreed. "Fair bet the last Lord Potter did before he died. The woman is still alive and it would seem you inherited her."

"Bloody hell! My Dad had a Concubine too? Who is she?"

Tonks shrugged. "The stone is Amethyst, so whoever she is was born in February. Aside from that, no idea. Only thing I can say is she did not belong to you Dad."

"How do you know?"

"He was never Lord Potter. Your Grandfather outlived him by seven years. Most likely, this woman was your grandfather's and is still bound to your House."

Hermione found the whole situation somewhat surreal. A week ago, she had still been in a coma and fighting for her life from the curse she had received in the Department of Mysteries. It was six days ago that she finally woke up, still weak and in some pain, to find Harry sitting beside her. It was then they had finally confessed their true feelings for one another, that they admitted they had loved each other for years and had both been afraid of losing their wonderful friendship if they tried to move into a more intimate direction. It was then that Harry had asked her to marry him and she had said yes, with the qualification that it would be a few years before the yes turned her into his wife.

Until then, she was convinced she was fated to be his best friend and closest confidant. She was not unhappy with that role as she did love

him and would accept any place in his life. She never considered herself pretty or sexy and was certain that Harry would not be interested in her physically or romantically. It was only six days since she learned that his reticence was not due to her, but due to what he thought she thought about him. It was six days ago she first truly kissed him and he became her boyfriend and her future fiancé.

Two days ago, they were on the train returning from school. Their intimacy was limited to kissing each other senseless while she sat in his lap. He still was avoiding more intimate contact and she was not concerned thinking when he was ready, she would be. It was two days ago her parents learned she finally had a true boyfriend and shocked her to her core by accepting him. Then again, she had been a loner before she met Harry. She remembered her parents' whispered conversations regarding whether she would ever have a true friend or ever a boyfriend or husband.

They shocked her when they accepted Harry with little question. They shocked her even more when they lay down the rules for her new relationship. She expected them to say no sex before marriage as they had always seemed almost as strait laced as she had been. What they told her was no sex in their house without a ring, no sex elsewhere without protection, and no babies without a husband. She had been stunned.

Yesterday, she woke up still a virgin. She had not expected to see or hear from Harry for days or weeks because of his forced incarceration with his god awful relations. She still did not know much about that situation, only that he hated it. Yesterday, Tonks arrived, told her she and her parents were in mortal danger, arranged for her parents to leave the country indefinitely, and brought her here. Yesterday, she and her Harry found themselves in this Manor - no Palace - and were left alone together with a whole summer of together before them.

Yesterday, she had surprised herself with her boldness and her ability to place her libido and teenage hormones over her intellect. Yesterday, she had offered herself to Harry and did so with only a modicum of embarrassment and without any shame. Yesterday, he had taken that offer, and taken her again and again and again - ten



times! Even as sore as she was today, she had still had oral sex with him three times. To her amazement, she loved it. To her surprise, she had wound up married to her love. Less than twenty-four hours, yet at sixteen she was a Consort and he at fifteen was her Husband for life. This morning she had read about the bond that had formed between them and knew this was forever. She also knew there was a very good chance she would be pregnant within the year. Her will was tied to school, and she now knew she was never going back to Hogwarts as a student and neither was Harry. Not so long as Dumbledore was Headmaster. If school was in her immediate future, she was sure she could hold off on giving Harry his children. Now? Not bloody likely.

Last night, she had learned she was married. She had also learned about the Wizarding World's dirty little secret. She had learned about Concubines and to her dismay, how she was destined to become one against her will had Harry and her not bonded. To her horror, she learned many girls she considered to be friends were similarly destined. She had read today just what that meant and told Harry.

And here was the weird part, she thought. She had actually asked him to buy their friends. A week ago she had no boyfriend at all, now she was married and was encouraging her husband of less than a day to have a harem. What really shocked her was that she was fine with the idea. It went against everything she had learned growing up. It had went against everything Harry had learned, although from what little she knew of his home life, he seemed less dismayed that such a world could exist. He expected bad things whereas she did not.

Harry was pacing the floor of the Library in the distance. Hermione knew it was because of their last conversation. The decision point had come. Harry had to either bond with Tonks and take her as his Concubine or put her up for sale. He had asked Hermione for her opinion. A week ago, she would have said something else for certain. Today, she knew the right thing to do was not what she had been taught. She knew that by bonding with Tonks, Tonks would become a second wife of sorts. She knew that he would have to have sex with the older witch to bond with her and from this day forward have sex with her to maintain the bond. She knew that Tonks would be a sex partner for the foreseeable future and that Hermione, while first in

Harry's heart, would have to share his body with Tonks and with others as Harry had two other concubines it seemed.

Harry was stunned when she had suggested buying their friends. He was floored when she said that the right thing to do for Tonks was to bond with her and that he should bond with the other two women as well. Hermione was also stunned by her decision, but it was logical. Tonks was a friend and there was no telling what situation she would be sold into if Harry did not take her in. This Mallory woman was his godfather's love and she too could well be worse off. Never mind the fact that Sirius had asked Harry to take them in. "MGM" was his own family in a way and he could not sell her, could he? Taking them in, bonding with them, protecting them, Hermione told Harry it was the right thing to do regardless of the taboos they had both been raised under. She actually hoped he would take them in, and the others as well, even though she knew she would have to share her husband. She knew that while it was not the best for her, it was the best for them. She actually hoped he would do it, which stunned her.

She saw Harry stop pacing as his back went strait. She knew he had reached a decision even before he turned towards where she sat on the long bench near Tonks, the same bench where she had surrendered her virginity only the day before and where she became his Consort. He walked over and she could not read his expression one way or another. She knew Tonks heart was pounding, for her's was too and she had less at stake as far as she was concerned.

Harry was soon standing in front of them.

"Have you made a decision, Harry?" Hermione asked. Harry nodded. "And?"

"You get to explain all of this to your parents," he said. He then turned to Tonks.

"Nymphadora Tonks? Dora? I, Harry James Potter, by right of inheritance Lord Black and Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, by right of inheritance of your being Concubine to my godfather, take you Dora as my Concubine. Your mind, body, heart,

soul and magic are mine, bound as slave to master, you are mine to command as I will and to use as I please, from this day forward until death shall separate you from my House and Heirs. Do you understand?"

Tonks nodded.

Hermione was more than a bit nervous. She was confident in her love for her Harry and his for her. She was gaining confidence in the bond she shared with him as his Consort and life mate. Still, he was about to have sex with another woman. Even though she considered Tonks a friend and even though it was in the context of the Concubine Bond, it was still sex. Then again, this was a fantasy of hers: to watch Harry pleasure another woman and in a situation where she knew he was Hermione's man. Part of her, the muggle part, did not want to watch or know. Part of her, the kinky slut part as Harry called it, wanted to watch and was only worried that she would not be able to wait until he was done with the bonding before she had to get off.

Harry and Tonks were standing right before her. Harry was holding her gently by her arms and was starting to kiss her. Hermione knew he was a good kisser. She may not have had much experience with that, and she knew neither did Harry, but he could make her toes curl with a kiss. She also knew that Tonks would react to a good kiss because of the building bond. The bonding kept her mind where it was, but her body would react to any successful pleasure even if her mind wanted to rebel or run away.

It was obvious, Harry was snogging the older witch senseless. She could tell by Tonks' body language that the poor woman was melting beneath his kiss - just as Hermione had. There was a part of Hermione that wondered whether Harry was as good a physical lover as she thought or whether it was just her desire that had made her think that. Now she would see, she thought. When Harry began feeling the poor witch up, Hermione saw Tonks' knees almost buckle. When the kiss broke, Tonks' expression suggested that she might have had a mini-orgasm from Harry's attentions and would have had he actually touched her down there. Tonks had been shagging two different men for the last few years, yet the woman's expression as

Harry broke the kiss finally suggested she had never been snogged like that. This, Hermione thought, was going to be interesting!

It amused her to think as she watched Tonks undress following a command to do so from Harry that three of her fantasies were to come to pass within a day: lose her virginity to Harry, having another woman watch as she and Harry made love, and now watching Harry and another woman. Tonks blouse and skirt were now gone. Hermione knew that Harry was impressed, mostly with the very large breasts on the woman. But Tonks was also fit, a product of her Auror training no doubt. Hermione could already see Harry's reaction to Tonks as the bra came off revealing those large breasts. Harry probably sensed her insecurity as, while she was hardly lacking in the boob department, Tonks clearly had her outclassed by at least a cup size. Harry looked over at Hermione and waggled his eyebrows. For some reason, this made her feel better. She actually giggled at his gesture.

The plain, cotton knickers slid off and Tonks stood before both of them naked. Unlike Hermione, she did not shave between her legs and Hermione noted that Harry seemed a little put off by it for only a second. He was soon kissing her again and exploring her body with his hands. Hermione heard Tonks moan softly into the kiss as she watched Harry begin to fondle the ample breasts. He soon broke the kiss and leaned down, taking one of Tonks nipples into his mouth and rewarding himself and his audience with an even louder moan of pleasure from the witch.

When he broke the kiss, he stepped over to the couch and knelt on it a little over an arms length away from her and facing Hermione. He ordered Tonks into his lap, her back to him and she too was facing Hermione. Hermione had a good idea what Harry was up to. She also knew he was deliberately giving her a show. Once Tonks settled in as ordered, Harry's hands began playing with her breasts as he kissed her shoulders, neck, cheeks and, with a little adjustment on both their parts, lips. Hermione heard the gasps and saw the expression of building excitement on the witch as Harry's right hand slid from the thoroughly stimulated and rock hard nipple it had been working, slowly down Tonks firm stomach and towards her sex. Hermione watched as he teased her, running his fingers through her pubic hairs

and inner thighs yet avoiding anything particularly sensitive for a moment.

She knew Tonks was hot and wanted Harry to bring her to release. She knew because she could smell the other woman's arousal, see the wetness that was building up, see the expression of desire and pleasure on her face and feel her own arousal building rapidly between her own legs. A gasping moan filled the library as Harry finally pushed his fingers between her folds and began working her hard clit. It was not long before Tonks was thrusting into his hand to encourage his pace. Tonks was gasping and groaning with pleasure, her eyes closed and her mouth hanging open. Hermione found watching her face as she responded to Harry's touch was driving her mad. She knew she would not be able to wait until it was all over and would probably have to rub herself off - soon! Maybe even more than once!

"Tell me when you cum," Harry whispered to Tonks. At the moment she was incapable of words as Hermione thought she was close. Harry seemed to sense that too as his hand shifted and Hermione watched as two fingers slowly buried themselves into Tonks' core as she moaned in ecstasy and began gasping for breath.

Harry was soon rapidly driving his fingers in and out of Tonks. She was groaning with pleasure whenever she could catch a breath which was increasingly seldom. Hermione knew it would be soon and was not wrong as Tonks finally vocalized something other than a gasp or moan of pleasure. "C-c-commmming!" she moaned before collapsing into Harry's arms in sated exhaustion.

That was enough for Hermione. She was too turned on to wait for Harry to finish with the bonding ritual, and considering they really had not even started yet she knew she could not wait that long without release. She also knew that for now she was on her own. Oddly, she didn't mind. The thought of playing with herself while Harry and Tonks went at it was another turn on for Hermione. As Harry gave Tonks a cuddle as she caught her breath, Hermione took off her clothes and got ready for her fun as well. She decided she could wait until the other two began another sex act, but hoped it would not be too long.

Harry was standing in front of her having ordered Tonks to undress him. His sword was ready for a sword swallowing exhibition from the older witch now kneeling before him. Hermione was watching both Harry and Tonks as Tonks took Harry and swallowed him to the hilt. As Harry groaned in appreciation, Hermione began pleasuring herself, her legs spread wide so Harry could watch if he wanted, which he did. Her limited experience with Harry, and no prior experience to alter her opinion, told her that Harry did not hold back when she sucked him off and usually finished quickly. Quite unlike when he made love to her where he always lasted at least long enough for her to come. She wondered if while watching each other they could still find a way to finish together. She saw the desire in his eyes and she knew from his expression he saw it in hers. Although it seemed far quicker than normal, she was soon telling him she was there and saw as he released into Tonks' mouth seconds later. The first part of the bonding ritual was complete, she thought as she came down from her climax.

Hermione's eyes fluttered open after the first new moan of pleasure from Tonks. Tonks was seated near her, legs spread wide, with the black haired mass between them. Harry was licking her silly. Hermione had a theory about this talent Harry had demonstrated. There was no way that tongue of his was normal when it had entered and explored her. She believed that Tonks could confirm her theory of his singularly unique ability with his tongue, but had to wait for him to invade her to have any hope of confirmation. She watched intently, yet shifted her gaze from Harry's actions to Tonks' reactions. She felt she would know when Harry would shift from Tonks' clit to invading her totally. She was not wrong. Looking at Tonks as Harry's tongue began to explore her deeply, she saw Tonks eyes fly open in shock and pleasure. Tonks looked her in the eyes and all Hermione could do was nod in reply. Hermione's suspicions seemed to have been confirmed and she noted Tonks was now as out of control with passion as she had been. Tonks announced her new orgasm in seconds.

Harry did not give the relaxing witch more than a moments rest as he almost immediately rose up from kneeling between her now relaxed legs and entered her with his renewed arousal. That was all it took to get Hermione going on herself again. Tonks would have two more

climaxes and Hermione was able to hold off until Harry finally came as Tonks succumbed to her second climax. Hermione noted the flash of magic that happened upon Harry's finish and now saw the black ribbon with the silver "B" that graced Tonks' neck. It was actually somewhat fetching, she thought. It was also proof positive that she was now bound to Harry. But she also knew that to bind Tonks to her would require one more act of intimacy.

She would have to make love to Harry again as the newly bound Tonks watched as she was House Potter and not Black. It was a rare situation where two Houses were combined under one person and to combine the Houses Consorts and Concubines to each other's house required the exhibitionist display. Not that Hermione minded at all. She, in fact, would make love to her Harry four times before the three of them finally fell asleep in the Master's Bedchambers. It might have been more had Harry not given her a break by taking Tonks in turn. When she fell asleep in his arms that night with Tonks also cuddled against him, part of her knew she could accept this bizarre lifestyle.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, age 15 (born 7/31/80) Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER 6/23/96.

Nymphadora (Dora) Tonks, age 21 (7/12/74); Title of Interest to Sirius Black 3/18/74; Concubine By Proxy (Remus Lupin) to Sirius Black 6/20/87; Bound to Sirius Black, 7/22/93; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF BLACK 6/24/96.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: ENTER THE WEREWOLF

TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 1996. Potter Manor.

It was early in the morning and still dark outside. Harry had awoken from a very pleasant dream and was staring at the ceiling in the Master's Bedchambers contemplating just how bizarre his life had become. After bonding with Tonks, "Dora" as she was now called, and a filling dinner, Hermione invited Dora to spend the night with them. Nestled against his left side, her brown hair and head using his chest as a pillow slept the love of his life. That he was sleeping with her at all would have been unthinkable to him only a few days ago. That another head of brown hair was using his right side as a pillow was beyond any of his wildest, adolescent dreams. That Hermione wanted this, wanted to share him with another woman was - well, he never would have seen that coming. Not in a million years.

For the past week, Hermione had been a constant source of surprises. It had been almost a week since she woke up in the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts following her near death in the desperate fight at the Department of Mysteries, an event Harry now knew had changed his life forever. From now on, his life would be defined in at least three very distinct phases: the Pre-Hogwarts Phase, the first five years and now this new one.

The pre-Hogwarts phase began before Harry could even remember. It was the only life he had known. It was a life bereft of love, affection, kindness and friendship, when he lived a lonely existence. Abused and neglected by his own family, he was denied any kind of childhood and was then convinced not only that he would never know love, affection or friendship, but that he did not deserve any of those things that most people took for granted.

He had been abused and neglected from the day he arrived at his Aunt and Uncle's house as a mere baby. He was beaten frequently and often for no reason, just because they could. He slept in a cupboard under the stairs on a hard piece of plywood and was often locked in there for hours and even days at a time. He thought that was normal, at least for him.



He was five years old before he knew he had a real name. Before then, he answered only to "Boy" or "Freak." He learned his real name while being beaten by his Uncle a week before they had to send him off to primary school. Uncle Vernon Dursley wanted to be sure the "Boy" would not embarrass his family by being ignorant of his name, although all through the beating he complained that his Aunt should have left Harry in the dustbin that Uncle Vernon dumped him in the day after he was found on their doorstep.

Harry had an innate love of learning. Vernon made sure he never used it. Harry was at the top of his class his first year in Primary School and his Cousin Dudley was at the bottom. When this little fact came to light, Vernon beat Harry mercilessly and made it clear that if he ever outperformed a real boy again, he would pay for it. Harry suppressed or did his best to hide his intelligence from that day forward. Hopes and dreams were now the things for real people. As Harry was a "freak," he did not deserve such things. Hopes and dreams were for normal people, not "freaks" like him.

Not long after his eleventh birthday, that phase ended abruptly. True, the Dursleys still treated him worse than an animal and had he been a dog, they would have been arrested by the BSPCA. But he learned he was not a "freak," rather he was a wizard. That revelation ended the first phase in his life.

The second phase in life began to rekindle his humanity. Almost from the start, he found acceptance and friendship. True, he also learned he was famous and suspected he was wealthy and could care less. It was his friendships that mattered to him.

It was at Hogwarts, where he found friendship, trusted Dumbledore, found his godfather and began to believe he was deserving of love. But a dark cloud hung over him and refused to go away. Voldemort was regaining power and wanted him dead. Harry had killed a man at the age of eleven, although he did not remember the actual death. People had died or had almost died simply because they knew him and were believed to be close to him, even if they were not.

Harry had fallen in love with a wonderful girl. He should have been dating her and looking forward to spending all his time with her, but

he held back. Deep down he feared for her safety and his fear was based upon the fact that if they did become a couple, it would be a death sentence for her. He would rather not have her at all than be the cause of her death. He could not live without her in his life, yet he could not have her close.

Moreover, she was his best friend. Now that he looked back on it in hindsight, that alone marked her as a target. Keeping her away would never save her. He should have known, but the noble thing to do was love her from afar and hope for the best for her. He knew there was little if any hope for himself. He knew his destiny was to die at the hands of Voldemort one day and the best he could hope for was he'd take the bastard with him. He held his feelings for Hermione to himself.

He was also scared that she might not feel the same way about him. Again, he should have known otherwise. They both were very uncomfortable with physical contact and physical displays of affection. They both guarded their feelings and built walls to keep others from hurting them. Yet, between them, those barriers did not exist. Hermione was one of the few people who could touch him, hug him or kiss him without making him recoil or tense up and he now realized he was one of the few she had no problem showing affection to and certainly the only boy. Still, the fear for her safety and fear of rejection blinded him to that reality and mired him in a world without hope for his future or a reason to live beyond Voldemort. He was also concerned that if he and Hermione got together, he would lose his friendship with Ron. Now he wondered so what?

The new phase he found himself in was both very disturbing and exhilarating at the same time. It began in combat and with the death of his Godfather Sirius. The death had enraged him. He had so hoped Sirius would become a permanent fixture in his life and he had felt he led the man to his death. He would have dwelled on that and, based upon past experience, wallowed in guilt for months or years. Then, after a row with Dumbledore that momentarily convinced him he had nothing really to live for, he went to check on his friends in the Hospital Wing. That changed his life again and forever.

It was Hermione. Seeing her there near death broke him. His shields he had raised to evade pain came crashing down around him. They had tried to kill her. They had tried to kill her because she stood with him in the line of battle. But Harry knew that they would sooner or later have done the same to her just because she was not one of them. He knew when he saw her in the Hospital Wing that he could not live without her in his life. He knew then that she had to know how he felt about her regardless. He knew then that her life was all that mattered to him. He would not die! He could not die! He had to live to ensure that she would live. If she died, then all worth fighting for was lost. Even if she did not love him as he loved her, she was a future.

Then she awoke and she loved him! Ron had freaked out. Harry did not care. She loved him too! Now there was a future worth fighting and living for, Harry knew. He wanted to live! He wanted to be there for her tomorrow, next week, and a hundred years from now! The dream that woke him up was one of a distant future where he and his Hermione were surrounded by children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. She was his home, she is his home. She was worth fighting for and she was worth dreaming for a true future beyond the nightmare than had been his life.

She was the only woman he had ever wanted. Woman, he thought. She was sixteen! Okay, almost seventeen ... still! They were so young! It didn't matter. If she told him today she was pregnant, he would not be upset at all. He could only envision one mother of his children and she was it.

But then this Concubine thing smacked him in the face. She stunned him by being open to the idea! She, the champion of House Elves and such was all but begging him to accept other bound women in his life! He would never have guessed that. Moreover, he would never had bound with Tonks at all had not Hermione all but insisted upon it.

What had really shocked him was her sexual openness. He had not seen that coming at all. She was a sexy young woman, a fact that he came to realize for the first time at the Yule Ball nearly a year and a half ago. When he saw her, he was floored by her and totally captivated. Were it not for his fear of intimacy and fear of losing her as a friend...

She had all but jumped him a couple of days ago. She told him later that it had been her dream for some time and as soon as she was sure he was not just about getting in her knickers, as soon as she knew this was the real deal, she knew she would not wait long.

What further stunned him was that while he had fantasized about her, and while he used such fantasies for “wanking material” ever since the night of the Yule Ball, his sexual fantasies were tame as compared to her. Hers were far more erotic than anything he imagined. It was a few of her fantasies that had led him to where he was now. He now thought of the two women in bed with him as “babe blankets.” He never thought Hermione would share him with anyone and never thought she would be the one to suggest it, but she did and she was. He was supposed to be the horny teen! She was the one with the imagination. How did he get to be so lucky?

This new phase once again meant the destruction of the life Harry had taken for granted before. Such destruction had its physical manifestations in the death of Sirius and his now very physical relationship with Hermione. But it was also defined by the death of any trust or respect for Dumbledore and Molly Weasley, two adults he had looked up to in the past, as well as serious questions about two he considered close if not best friends: Ron and Ginny Weasley. These events should have sent him into a funk, yet that had not happened. Instead, Hermione happened. Her admission that she loved him as much as he loved her erased whatever grief he was feeling about what had happened at the Department of Mysteries. Her arrival here barely two days ago erased his ability or need to sulk. Their relationship erased the hopelessness he had felt most of his life and replaced it with the opposite: dreams of a future together and a desire to see that future come into being. Add in the sex part, and Harry was in total heaven. Moreover, the nature of her bond to him, as well as the bond he now had with Tonks and would have with other women in the near future meant that the deceit and guile that had been directed at him in his previous life would not exist, could not exist in this new one. Not with his girls at any rate. Trust and family were two things Harry had always wanted in life. He now had them.

Sirius had written that he should not place life on hold just because the times seem bleak. He would not. If Hermione or any of the other women wanted to start a family, he would not stop them absent a compelling reason. In Hermione's case, he could only think of one: school. But, he had a feeling that neither he nor Hermione would ever set foot in Hogwarts again as students. As long as their education could continued, why not start a family now? They were, after all, in the eyes of both magic and magical law married.

The truth was, Harry's only real worry right now was how were they going to explain all of this to Hermione's parents. Fortunately, that day was far off in a distant and murky future.

Pleasant thoughts of his new life filling his head, Harry gave the two women a gentle squeeze and was rewarded with a sigh from each just before falling back to sleep.

Harry and "his girls" as he now thought of them were in the private dining room having breakfast. The two women had their "just been shagged senseless" goofy grins on, although technically they had not really been shagged. They both woke up and complained of being a little sore, so Harry had to resort to alternative measures, which meant oral sex. Tonks had suggested a less time consuming way to accomplish this and demonstrated for Hermione to Harry's pleasure. Nothing like licking pussy while she blows me at the same time, he had thought. Hermione was now a huge fan of this method of early morning play time. Harry had allowed Tonks to speak freely and they were talking about their new game. Although Tonks did complain about having her bits bald. Harry had Hermione "fix" her after his morning game complaining that he really didn't enjoy picking her hairs out of his teeth. Hermione tried to reassure her that it wasn't so bad and mentioned she could now wear the barest of bikinis without waxing. All of this Harry found both somewhat erotic and definitely amusing.

"So Milord," Tonks began after a long conversation with Hermione about Harry's recently revealed talents, "why didn't you tell me you were a metamorphagus?"

“What?” Harry nearly choked on his toast. “What’re you on about, Dora?”

“A metamorphagus, Harry,” Hermione said. “You know? Like Dora? Why’d you keep that a secret? I thought you were my friend,” Hermione sounded hurt, but looked like she was messing with him.

“What makes you think I am one?” Harry asked.

“Couple of things,” Tonks replied. “But first, let’s rule out the more likely scenario, okay?”

“I guess,” Harry said with caution.

“Can you do wandless, non-verbal magic?”

“Accidentally or on purpose?”

“Deliberately.”

“No. Not that I am aware of.”

“Then you must be like me,” Tonks concluded.

“Why?”

“First off, you are either the most virile and horny fifteen year old wizard in history, or you must be like me.”

“Why?”

“Turn around time, for one.”

“Excuse me?”

“Hermione and I have both fucked or sucked you senseless, leaving you panting, spent and limp as a wet noodle. Yet again and again, within ten minutes you’re ready for more. Either you’re doing non-

verbal wandless magic on your cock, or you're a metamorphagus and using that talent to reload your weapon quickly."

"Maybe I'm just eager."

"Harry," Hermione said, "the day we bonded, you had sex with me fourteen times! That is if you include your - er - accident and oral. Yesterday another fourteen between Dora and me, again including oral. By my reckoning, you managed that in eight hours or less per day. That means about two times an hour without much of a break!"

"That's serious staying power," Tonks said, "particularly since you never failed to get us to come and most often two for your one. Powerful orgasms, I might add. Wore us both out!"

"And this is relevant because?" Harry asked.

"I was tag teamed on more than one occasion by Sirius and Remus," Tonks said.

"Tag teamed?"

"They took turns with me until they couldn't keep going," Tonks said. "Best that they managed was seven times each in one day, and you equaled or exceeded both of them combined! The only reason I think it was not even more was you wore us out, not the other way around. That screams Metamorphagus!"

"Or horny, teenage bastard," Harry chided.

"Which brings us to point two," Dora said. "This one cannot be debated. You do things to us with that tongue of yours that is out of this world! No one has a tongue like that! I could feel it growing inside of me until it filled me! What made you do that?"

"Just wanted to feel what was inside," Harry confessed, "as much of it as I could."

“Well, it was no engorgio spell, I can tell you that,” Tonks said. “You have the makings of a metamorphagus. We’ll have to factor that into to our training program.”

“Training program?” the two teens asked.

Tonks nodded. “Remus should be here in a bit. He’s going to go over that and a few other things as well.”

“Does he still have permissions to you,” Harry asked with suspicion.

Tonks shook her head. “The permission to me was from my former Master. It died with him.”

Harry nodded.

“Are you going to restore them?” Hermione asked.

“No,” Harry said. “Not unless Dora wants me to.” Harry looked at Tonks. She shook her head. “No then.”

Harry and Hermione were sitting in the library fully clothed for once. Harry found the thought amusing. He had spent more time getting shagged senseless in this room than in his own bed! Then again, Hermione was his Consort and she was turned on by books and such. They were both reading a book on the history of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter and Harry was doing his best to keep his composure. He found it difficult as Hermione was an exciting woman in his eyes and she was all cuddled up with him and...

“Down Harry,” Hermione scolded! “Later,” she whispered as Harry had attempted a gentle grope. “Remus does not get to see the show,” she whispered.

“ Ah,” Harry whispered back, “so the ‘I’ll shag you in public Hermione’ is really the ‘I’ll shag you in front of women Hermione’?”



“That’s right! There is only one man for me! Only one who can see that!”

“And who would that be?” Harry said as he began kissing her neck.

“Harry stop!” Hermione protested. “You’re driving me to distraction.”

“That was the idea.”

“And I’m getting tempted to jump you!”

“That was definitely the idea.”

“And we can’t - yet. You will need to learn a little self-control, Love.”

“Pity.” But deep down, Harry knew she was right. He was not sure he wanted another guy to see Hermione naked. No, he was sure he didn’t. She was his and his alone!

“Morning you two,” a gentle baritone voice called.

The two teens looked up and saw a tall and very familiar sandy haired man approaching.

“Remus!” Harry called out, but unlike so many times before made no effort to get up. He was not going to leave Hermione’s side. It wasn’t a protective thing, just an ‘I’m too comfortable here’ thing.

“Well,” Remus said eyeing the obviously close couple, “Tonks did say you two have become an item.” he chuckled. “Boyfriend and girlfriend. And about bloody time too!”

“Excuse me,” Hermione began.

“It’s been obvious to many for a while that you two were - ah - together even if you didn’t know it or want it to be known.”

“Actually, there’s more than just that,” Hermione said.

“Shagging her already?” Remus teased.

“I beg your pardon,” Harry feigned being insulted. “Hermione and I have never ‘shagged!’ Made love, yes. Shagged? No.”

“Ah, and the difference is?”

“Attitude!”

“Ah! Well, that should make things easier. Tonks tell you ‘bout the Old Man’ plans for you?”

The two teens nodded.

“Well, you’ll need to bond to avoid it.”

“Bit late,” Harry said. “Remus, meet my Consort: The Lady Hermione Potter.”

“Bugger! You already did it?”

“Well, it wasn’t exactly the kind of ceremony one invites guests to attend,” Hermione said returning to her former haughtiness for a moment.

“No, I guess not,” Remus chuckled. “So, when did this happen?”

“Few hours after she arrived,” Harry said. “She jumped me! What’s a poor, hard up teenage boy in love supposed to do?”

Remus chuckled. “Yes, I can just imagine how horrified you were.”

“I wouldn’t say that,” Harry started.

“The words eager and insatiable come to mind,” Hermione began, “and mind blowing orgasms.”

“You have no shame, woman,” Harry mocked.

“I have you! No shame in that. You have the mighty sword and know how to use it!”

“Right,” Remus laughed, “and now we venture into the realm of too much information!”

Harry and Hermione both laughed.

“So,” Remus said, “was your bonding before or after you found out about the Old Man plans for you?”

“Oh, before,” Hermione said. “Well before. Dora saw the final bit just as she got back from her errands. Honestly, I didn’t know that the oath I gave Harry would wind up binding me to him. It was just a silly thing I read in a Wizarding romance novel, or so I thought.”

“Hold on,” Remus said, “you recited an oath from a novel?”

Hermione nodded. “Dora said it was THE oath. She also said and the books I’ve read confirmed that, although I did not - er - intend to become Harry’s Consort and Wife at that time, we both intended it to happen sometime. That we both wanted it was all it took for the bonding to complete it seems.”

“Smartest witch of her age,” Remus said, “even if by accident.”

“And what is that supposed to mean?” Hermione asked insulted.

“It means we were so worried you might resist taking the Consort Bond with Harry. It means we were worried you would have to be a Concubine. You are in a far better position to use that keen intellect of yours to help Harry as a Consort than as a Concubine. Harry can ignore the latter, he cannot ignore you.”

“I couldn’t ignore her before neither,” Harry said, earning him an eager kiss from Hermione.

“And you were told of concubines?” Remus asked.

“Yes,” Harry said.

“And what are your opinions as to that?”

“Hermione’s opinion is all that matters,” Harry said. “I will do what she wants in that regard.”

“And what do you want, Hermione?”

“I’d prefer there was no such thing. I’d prefer a more egalitarian society. But these are the cards that are dealt. Dora and Mallory are House Black Concubines and I will not allow them sold or used. Harry has already bonded with Dora. I am okay with that. It’s not my idea of perfect as I’d rather have my Love all to myself, but we learned a few things recently and I need help. Try as I might, Harry can run me into the ground sexually. He ran Dora and I into the ground yesterday. We should summon the others today, don’t you think, Love?”

“Er,” Harry began.

“Others?” Remus asked.

“Mallory and whoever ‘MGM’ is,” Hermione said. “It seems there’s a House Potter Concubine as well.”

“Really? Never knew Charles had a concubine,” Remus stated. “Any others I should know about?”

“I’ve asked him to consider some purchases,” Hermione said. “We have friends who are in that catalog we were shown.”

“You’re okay with this?” Remus asked.

“No,” Hermione said. “I find it all fairly barbaric. But it is the system we live in and I want to help people I consider our friends and allies. If

there was another way, I would choose it. But from what I've read, they will be sold regardless and I'd prefer them to be part of Harry's family than part of any other I can think of. He will treat them well. Others might, he will."

"What do you have in mind?"

"Well, including me, there are two witches in House Potter and two in House Black, although Mallory and "MGM" are not yet bound. The Hogwarts witches we know who are up for sale are: Hannah Abbott, Katie Bell, Lavender Brown, Cho Chang, Padma and Parvati Patil, Sally-Anne Perks and Leanne Tinker. Of course, Sally-Anne did not return to Hogwarts for her Fifth Year and the catalog says she's now a student at St. Georges in London, still I knew her so she's on the list."

"That's twelve," Harry gasped in shock.

"That's only a start. The way I see it, ideally you should have one consort per house, one Matron and eight concubines."

"What? Why? And what's a Matron?"

"A Matron is an older concubine who acts as a sort of mother or big sister to all the other concubines in a house," Hermione exclaimed. "It's always the oldest or longest tenured concubine in a house. In House Black, this would probably be Mallory. In House Potter it would probably be this 'MGM'. Arguably, finding a Consort for House Black might be a bit problematic, but you should at least consider it."

"Why so many?"

"The total number of witches would be twenty. Including yourself, that's twenty-one bound members of Houses Potter-Black. That's a powerful magical number, Harry."

"But what about you?"

“As your Consort, I am above all of the others. I also am the one bound to you through love, so I will always be first in your heart.”

“And my bed,” Harry added earning a blush from Hermione. “Still, I am expected to have sex with all of these women, right?”

“And sleep with them from time to time.”

“How the bloody hell can I do that?”

“Don’t worry, Harry,” Hermione cooed. “I will have a schedule drawn up.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Should have seen that coming.”

“You may also want to factor in Ginny Weasley,” Remus said.

“Why? She’s part of a plot to do me in.”

“Precisely! The plot has already failed now that you two are here and bound to each other. Still, the enemy does not know that yet and is moving forward as if nothing has happened. There will still be an attempt made against you. It will fail, but that’s not the point. Under Wizarding law, an attempt against the Head of an Ancient and Noble House by another house creates a Debt of Honor when the attempt fails. The victim can claim spoils from the other house to erase the debt. It is one of two ways of obtaining a concubine without the permission of the guardian. The other is if the witch owes you a life debt.”

“Ginny owes you a life debt, Milord,” Hermione said softly.

“That’s right, she does. Still, why would I want that bitch in my family?”

“Revenge,” Remus said. “As your concubine, she is no threat to you and you can do with her as you please. About the only thing you

cannot legally do to her is kill her. But, you can also get even with your real enemy, Molly.”

“How?”

“Since Ginny owes you a life debt, you can take her at any time. You can either do it in secret, abduct her, or publicly claim her. Abduction would cause Molly more than a fair amount of pain. It’s doubtful she would take losing her only daughter well. But if the bitches do go forward with their plan to try and poison you, it might be better to claim her publicly. That would require publication of the whole sordid affair in the papers, humiliating Molly, implicating Dumbledore and forever blackening the name Weasley. Ginny, of course, would be known as a concubine and would be looked down on as little better than a House Elf. She would bear that burden for the rest of her life. Throw in the fact that Molly and Arthur are not bound, rather they are married and given Arthur’s honesty and integrity, he would probably have no choice than to divorce, leaving Molly with little or nothing.”

“Sounds cruel,” Hermione said.

“It is. But Bill thinks it is the most effective way short of murder to destroy Molly and seriously damage Dumbledore.”

“That’s Bill’s idea?” Harry asked.

“You can’t tell when he’s around them, but he is seriously pissed at his Mum and sister. It’s the reason why he and Fleur are part of our little group.”

“Remind me again who’s in this group?”

“It was Minerva McGonagall, Mallory Grant, Nymphadora Tonks, Fleur Delacour, Bill Weasley, Kingsley Shacklebolt, Sirius and myself. Arabella Figg and Amelia Bones are also considered members, but they don’t attend all of the meetings. Now that Sirius is gone, we’ve invited Alastor Moody to join and he has. He hates the Old Man as

much as anyone now. Can't forgive the bastard for the months he spent locked up in that trunk.

"All of us have our reasons for doing this. McGonagall has been trying to get you away from the Dursleys since the night you were left there. the Old Man thwarted every attempt and she lost all respect for the man years ago. I have been looking for you and your sister from that night onwards. When you first went to Hogwarts, I then began trying to find a way to restore you to your birthright. Sirius has been doing the same thing practically from the day he escaped from Azkaban. Mallory and Nymphadora have been helping in part because they had no choice being bound concubines. But the more they learned, the more they are doing this because they want to. Kinglsey has never trusted the Old Man and was eager to take part in any scheme to bring the man down. Arabella knows how you were treated at the Dursleys and blames the Old Man. Amelia also knows more about the bastard and wants to see him meet justice, but he's too slippery. Bill and Fleur are our most recent recruits. They both joined because of what Molly is up to, although Fleur may have joined anyway. She considers you a good friend and says her honor requires it as you had saved her sister's life once."

"So what are your plans for me?" Harry asked suspiciously.

"To restore you to your birthright and to train you so that you can, if you so desire, take on your enemies and win. You are potentially the most powerful wizard alive. We intend to see to it that it's more than potential. What you do is up to you. We are here to help you, teach you and advise you, but not to control you. It's your life to live, not ours."

"So what is the plan now?"

"The immediate plan is to find your sister and keep the Old Man from learning you are no longer under his control. Nymphadora, Moody and I are assigned as your minder by the Order. We are supposedly watching you have yet another horrible summer at the Dursleys. In reality, we are looking for your sister and attending to the administration of the Black and Potter Estates.



“As for your sister, we are ninety percent sure of who she is, we just don’t know where she is at the moment.” Moody opened the auction catalog and turned to page 47. There was a picture of a young woman with long, black hair and green eyes. Beside the picture it read:

CLARICE ANNE JAMESON

Born September 5, 1981. MUGGLE BORN. Completed 3rd Year St. George’s School of Magic. Stands at top of her year. Vitals: 5’6”. Black hair, green eyes, 35-23-34, 118 lbs. Bra size - B cup. Believed to be unspoiled. Wand: Holly w/ unicorn hair.

Initial asking price: 200G

Seller 1276 (Dumbledore was written beside the number in pen)

Pre-Auction Bidding Interest Expressed:

Buyer 32168 (Us)

“That bastard!” Harry growled. “Why? Why’s he doing this?”

“Tying up loose ends,” Remus shrugged. “If she were to marry or become a consort and give birth to a son, he would have the ability to dispute any claims of inheritance. As a concubine, her womb is not a threat to the Old Man plans.”

“Can we stop this?”

Remus shrugged. “We hope so. This Clarice was adopted by Michael and Margaret Jameson in November 1981 through an agency in London. We’ve known that much for a couple of years. Unfortunately, the Jameson’s address is sealed and until this catalog entry, we had no clue as to where to look.”

“But this doesn’t say where she lives,” Harry pointed out.

“Ah,” Remus smiled, “but it does say where she goes to school. Her school will have a record of where she is currently living. McGonagall will be meeting with the Headmaster next week about a student transfer request. It’s a forgery of course. She should be able to find out where your sister is.

“Once we know that, you’ll have to meet with her and her parents, explain the girl’s predicament and offer her the protection of your House. If she accepts such protection, you become her magical guardian and can withdraw her from the auction. Worse case scenario is that you buy her.”

“I’d rather not.”

“You don’t have to bond with her, Harry. As long as you own the paper, you control whether she can be bought or sold. She never has to be bound. Once you control her paper, you can then offer her the protection of your House in lieu of bonding with her.”

“So I really don’t have to take on concubines?”

“This is a special situation, Harry,” Hermione said. “Because she’s your sister, you can choose not to bond with her. The others are not your immediate family. If you acquire them, you do have to bond with them and make them concubines.”

“Aside from my sister, what else?”

“Well, we wait and see to a large extent,” Remus said. “We believe Voldie and his minions might make a go at some of your friends. We know the Old Man and Molly are going forward with their potion plan. Aside from that, both sides are doing little or nothing. The Old Man and Voldie each seem to have things going on that will absent them from their lairs for most of the summer if not longer. Voldie is recruiting, as is the Old Man. The Ministry is in a shambles. We do not believe anything major will happen for at least a year, maybe longer. That gives us an advantage. We have time.

“Beginning sometime in August, you and anyone you invite are going to begin intensive study and training to prepare you for whatever the future has to offer. If you have not figured it out, you will not be returning to Hogwarts. Our Order has three Aurors, a Healer, a top notch Curse Breaker, two current or former professors, more than enough to provide you with an education that would make Hogwarts seem useless. You will study Potions, Herbology, Transfiguration, Charms, Healing, Defense, Arthirmancy, Runes, Curse Breaking, Combat Tactics and you will also be trained in Muggle Combat. Marta your House Historian hopes to undo the damage you suffered as a student in Magical History. Basically, you will be tutored with the goal of having you at or beyond N.E.W.T. levels by this time next year.

“Between now and then we will try and let you have a nice holiday. But there are still things we hope you will agree to do.”

“Such as?” Harry asked.

“As Head of two Ancient and Noble Houses, you are required to go over the status of your estates before the reading of Sirius’s will. Both estates are large and this will take time. I recommend we go over the basics the next few days and then we can hit the details at the Gringotts branch in Pottersport.

“Also, you are going to undergo treatment for that binding on your magic. That might take a couple of weeks, during which time you will not be allowed to use your wand without supervision.”

“Why not?”

“You will need to learn to control the increases in your magical power, Harry. Without learning such control, you could be dangerous. Even a stunning spell can be lethal if there’s enough magic behind it. So you will train for about an hour a day to learn to control you magic and later how to use it at full force.

“We also recommend you get some exercise. Running, swimming and the like. Many witches and wizards don’t bother. They either don’t know or care that physical fitness enhances ones magic.”

“I - I don't know how to swim,” Harry confessed.

“I can teach you,” Hermione suggested.

“I'd like that. Anything else?”

“We intend that the mornings will be dedicated to your training and fitness. At least until August, the afternoons and evenings will be yours to do with as you please. Go out and explore the estate. Spend time with Hermione. Whatever.”

“Oh good,” Harry exclaimed! “I like spending time with Hermione!”

“I think he means that at least some of that time should be spent with our clothes on, Harry,” Hermione teased.

“Ahhh! That's no fun.”

“I'll be sure to make it up to you.”

“Looking forward to it.”

“I'm sure you are.”

“Sure is shaping up to be the best summer I've ever had.”

Hermione smiled knowing she was a major reason why.

“Now,” Remus said, “Tonks seems to have left out the bit about you two being bound. She did tell me something - er - unexpected happened to Harry. Mind explaining that?”

“It was when we bound,” Hermione said. “We were making love and when we finished, it happened.” She then described the event: Harry screaming in pain and passing out, the flash of magic, the other scream, the puff of smoke and the fact that he no longer had his scar.

“You were only having sex?” Remus asked.

“What do you mean?”

Remus explained what he thought had happened. “But, I’ll need so see your memory of the event - all of it - to be sure.”

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER 6/23/96.

Nymphadora (Dora) Tonks, age 21 (7/12/74); Title of Interest to Sirius Black 3/18/74; Concubine By Proxy (Remus Lupin) to Sirius Black 6/20/87; Bound to Sirius Black, 7/22/93; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF BLACK 6/24/96.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: A DISTANT MEMORY

TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 1996. Potter Manor.

“William?” Harry called.

An older Elf soon appeared. He was dressed in Potter robes and wore glasses. “How may I help you this morning, Milord?”

“Hermione? Remus? This is William. He’s the head librarian here at the Manor and, as I understand, was named after William Shakespeare.”

“Indeed I am,” William said with a grin.

“William, this is Hermione, my Consort. She’s a huge fan of books and libraries.”

“It is indeed an honor, Milady. And Remus. It’s been a while.”

“Indeed it has William,” Remus said. “I used to spend a lot of time here years ago,” Remus explained to the others. “How are Tasha and your children?”

“Tasha is fine. She works keeping the various guest houses ready. My son Arna is working with me. He’s currently working on the collection you sent over from the Black Estate. A lot of those books are in need of new bindings and preservation. My daughter Arla works in the town. She’s married now and has two young ones of her own. Petra is also married and works in a dress shop. Our youngest Mika is with the fishing fleet. He’s still not married and has a reputation of being a bit of a skirt chaser.”

“It is good to see you, old friend.”

“And you as well, Remus. Now, how may I help?”

“Do we have any pensieves?” Harry asked.

“Indeed we do, Milord. There are two here in the Library. One your grandparents left for you and there is another that is unoccupied.”

“Unoccupied?” Hermione asked.

“It means it doesn’t contain any memories,” Harry explained. “Could you bring both of them, William?”

“No problem.” Two pensieves appeared on the table. One had the misty and cloudy appearance in its fluid Harry recognized. The other was clear, obviously it was the empty one. Harry half listened as Remus explained to Hermione what he wanted to do. He was going to copy her memory of the bonding event so that he could see what happened. Harry did note he wanted to see the whole thing as the triggering event may not have occurred with their final bonding, rather it may actually have happened earlier. Hermione was blushing furiously the moment the long, silvery tendrils of thought had been extracted from her and were dropped into the unused pensieve. Remus winked at the two of them and soon disappeared into the pensieve.

Harry noticed Hermione was still blushing and chewing her lip. “Uh,” he started, “what’s wrong, Love?”

“Um,” she began.

“How much did you give him?”

“All of it.”

“All? From when?”

“From when we first began kissing until what happened to you.”

“Oh. Why?”

“Because I don’t know what happened and what caused it,” Hermione said with tears in her voice. “It could have been anything. I need to know what happened to you, Harry.”

“Then why are you upset?”

“He’s going to see everything!” she whimpered as she wrapped her arms around him and rested her head against his chest. “It was our first time, and he’ll see it all! It was supposed to be special.”

“It was, dear,” Harry said quietly. “And look on the bright side.”

“What bright side?”

“Now we can go back and see it too!”

“Oh. I hadn’t thought about that.”

“Come with me,” Harry said gently.

“Wh-where?”

“My grandfather left me this pensieve,” he said indicating the one Remus was not in. “I want to see what he left. I want you to be with me.”

“Okay,” she sniffed.

They soon found themselves in what looked like the music room on the First Floor. It looked far too real to be a pensieve memory to Harry. He told Hermione so, saying the memories were never in such vivid color as he had experienced this twice before and she never had.

“They’re here!” a voice called. Harry looked in the direction of the voice and saw an older man who looked remarkably like the portrait of Charles Potter from the Banquette Hall. “Charles” was soon joined by an older woman who looked like his grandmother Samantha and a



younger couple. Harry's jaw dropped and he paled as if seeing a ghost for the first time.

"Harry?" Hermione asked.

"M-my p-parents," Harry whispered with tears in his voice. "Th-this isn't a memory."

"He's so big," the younger woman with red hair cried. She almost ran to Harry and took him in his arms. Harry was stunned. He could feel the woman and she felt real. He could feel the warmth of her body and smell her scent in the air. This was no memory.

"Mum?" he asked.

She broke the hug and looked at him. She then nodded. Harry knew this was not real but could not help it. He was in his mother's arms for the first time that he could remember. He could not stop the tears that came. For a long while, no one said anything. They all waited for Harry to calm down.

"You've definitely sprouted a bit," said the young man with dark hair and glasses. "Don't think I can throw you up in the air anymore."

"Dad?"

"Doesn't miss a thing," the young man said.

"But this is not possible!" Harry protested. "This is no memory! Where are we?"

"Need to ask Dad that one, Son," the young man said. "This is his invention."

Harry turned to the older man. "You're my grandfather, Charles Potter, right?"

The old man nodded. "And this is your grandmother Sam," he added. "We looked for you for a long time and never found you. If I were still alive, I'd kill that bastard for stealing you from us."

"I don't understand? This is not a memory?"

"I figured that these pensieves can have other uses. What you are seeing is almost real. We are projections of ourselves from the past. We can interact with you, talk to you. We have all the memories we had when the projection was cast. In the case of James and Lily, they are as they were on October 1st, 1980. In the case of Sam and I, we are as we were on July 5th, 1987. Since we are here with you in this projected reality, I assume it is safe to say we're dead?"

Harry nodded. "Learned that only a couple of days ago. You and Grandmother died in 1988. There was an outbreak of dragon pox and it claimed you."

The old man actually laughed. "Oh it's a good thing we have no memory of that! That's one nasty illness!"

"Are we dead?" Lily asked.

Harry nodded. "The two of you were murdered by Voldemort on October 31st, 1981. He tried to kill me but failed for some reason. You were murdered because your Secret Keeper was or became a Death Eater and betrayed you."

"I told Sirius that Peter was a bad idea!" James said angrily.

"Peter?" Charles Potter asked. "But the whole world thought Sirius was the one! He's rotting in Azkaban for betraying you to Him!"

"Sirius is in Azkaban?" Lily cried. "That's horrible!"

"Hold on," Harry called out. "Let's all get a grip! Mum? Dad? Your projection is from 1980. Granddad and Grandmum's is from 1987. Today is June 25th, 1996. Obviously a lot has happened since your projections were created."

The projections of his relations looked at him in interest.

“Peter Pettigrew was your Secret Keeper,” Harry continued looking at the projections of his parents. “He was a Death Eater and betrayed you to Voldemort and you were killed although I was the target of the attack. Only the two of you, Pettigrew, Sirius and Dumbledore knew who the Secret Keeper was. After you died, Sirius tracked the rat down and cornered him. Pettigrew escaped by transforming into his rat animagus form, but not before blowing up the place and killing a dozen or more muggles in the process. Sirius was accused of the offense and sent off to Azkaban without trial. Dumbledore knew of his innocence and did nothing!”

“Always said that man was a bigger menace than Voldemort,” Charles Potter commented.

“Sirius escaped from Azkaban three years ago,” Harry went on. “Everyone thought he was hunting me down. He was to an extent. He wanted to find me. But his real mission was to find Pettigrew who had been living as a rat - a family pet for all those years. It was my Third Year at Hogwarts. Remus Lupin was my Professor in Defense Against the Dark Arts and the best we ever had in that subject. Towards the end of the year, the truth came out. I met Sirius. We uncovered Pettigrew. But he escaped and we were not able to clear Sirius’s name. Sirius had to go into hiding, but we remained close hoping for a day when he could fully be the guardian he had not been.

“Sirius Black was my friend. I do miss him so.”

“Was?” James asked.

“There was a battle a little over a week ago in the Department of Mysteries. I and five of my friends fought against twelve Death Eaters. We held them at bay but could not beat them. Sirius was one of the members of the Order who turned the tide of battle. But he was killed. He was our only fatality. I took off after Bellatrix LeStrange, his murderer and caught her briefly. Had Voldemort not arrived, I would have killed her.”

“You fought Voldemort?” James asked.

Harry shrugged. “He’s not that tough really. Excluding the night you died, I’ve fought him four times. Just can’t seem to kill the bastard.”

“You’ve fought him four times?” Lily asked in horror.

Harry nodded. “The first two times he was trying to return to a physical form. When he tried to kill me as a baby, something happened and he was destroyed, but not killed. I killed a professor of mine whom he had possessed when I was eleven. I destroyed another version of him when I was twelve. Last year he was able to regain a physical form, although I doubt you would call it truly human. I fought him moments later. It was a draw and I was able to escape him and the scores of Death Eaters who had rallied to him. Not without cost, though. A friend of mine died in that encounter.”

His mother wrapped him in her arms. “No one should have had to experience that!” she cried. “I never wanted that for you, Harry.”

“It’s okay - er - Mum,” Harry said. “Compared to the Dursleys, Voldemort is a welcome change of pace.”

“The Dursleys!” Lily practically shrieked. “Please don’t tell me you were living with them!”

“Okay, I won’t.” Harry snarked.

“You were, weren’t you?”

Harry nodded.

“I should never have trusted that bastard,” Lily screamed. “I don’t know why I ever did!”

“You’re a Consort, right Mum?” Harry asked, hoping to change the topic.

She nodded.

“Why?”

“Aside from the fact I could not help but fall in love with your father, I found out about the Concubine Auction. Professor McGonagall told me about it, what it meant and that I was scheduled to be sold. I went to James and asked him to accept me as Consort as that would prevent the sale, and he accepted. I learned that I had a magical guardian and he had the right to sell me. Never learned who he was.”

“It was Dumbledore,” Harry said. “He tried the same thing with my Hermione.”

“Hermione?”

Hermione had been largely ignored up to this point. Harry walked over to her and pulled her close to him. “This is my Hermione,” he said. “My Consort, the Lady Potter.”

Hermione was suddenly overwhelmed by Harry’s projected parents and grandparents. She was hugged and kissed by the women and hugged by the men, each of them welcoming her to the family. She expected some complaint from them. She was only sixteen and Harry fifteen. Yet they seemed to ignore the youth of her and Harry.

“Let me guess,” Charles Potter said. “You’re Muggle Born, right?”

Hermione nodded.

“And probably smart as a whip,” Samantha added.

“She’s the brightest witch of our age,” Harry said proudly.

“Typical,” Charles said. “Typical Potter! Harry here has found a fetching young lass who’s smart to boot. Must be genetic.”

“How so?” Harry asked.

“Aside from my father, who was forced into an arranged marriage, we Potters have always married bight and fetching Muggle Borns. And my father made up for it. While my Mum was a Pureblood, once I was born and she had done her duty as a wife of producing and heir, he took a concubine. She was named Nellie. She was a smart, very attractive Muggle Born witch. She was killed in the War in 1941. She was visiting her family and the Gerries bombed London that night. He loved her. His wife he was stuck with. He never loved my Mum. But Nellie? He did love her.

“For all practical purposes, Nellie was my Mum. My real mother, Dorea, took little interest in either me or my older sisters. Nellie did. She and Dad were together for almost twenty-five years. When she died, I was already bound to my Sammy and was a Squadron Leader in the RAF and had fought in the Battle of Britain.

“I had trained in Hurricanes and flew them in France before Dunkirk. I transitioned to Spitfires after that. Dad was a patriot and donated part of this Estate to the RAF for a training base. The base is still here, or at least it was when I made this projection. It reverted to my father not long after the War and we’ve kept it operational.

“Anyway, Nellie was killed in the Blitz and Dad was devastated. Took him years to get over her death, assuming he ever did. In ‘43, he bought another concubine named Minnie. Dad came to love her very much as well. His only regret about the two women was that he was not able to give them the one thing he wanted to: children. Dorea would not have it.

“Minnie almost got a chance. My wife and I were having a hell of a time trying to have a child. She suffered through four miscarriages. We tried everything to conceive and keep a child, but nothing seemed to work. In 1959, we tried one last time. If we failed again, Dad was going to give Minnie to me in the hopes that she would bear my children and, hopefully, my heir. Ah, but fate is unpredictable. Sam did get pregnant again and eventually bore me a son, James.

“For reasons best left unsaid, James never saw much of Minnie and certainly not after he turned five. He never knew much about her

except that she was a 'friend of the family.' My wife and I lived in one of the large guest houses, Dad lived in the Manor so it was not like they would cross paths too often.

"When Dad passed away in '78, Minnie passed to me. Sam was okay with that as she liked Minnie a lot. True, my relationship with Minnie was not the same as Dad. I liked her, I certainly admired her, but I did not love her the way Dad had. Now that I find I've been dead a while, I do hope she's okay."

"She seems to be," Harry said.

"You've met her?"

"No. Not yet. But there is an 'MGM' on my Potter Ring. Obviously, that's not Hermione. Hers is 'HJP'."

"So it seems she's still around. Good. She might be a bit old for you, Harry, but she is a wonderful woman. Treat her nice."

"I will."

"So Son," James said, "What have you been doing with yourself?"

Harry told them. He told them a little about life at the Dursleys, but left out the really bad parts. He was not ready to reveal those, although he knew he would soon. He would tell Hermione soon, but no others until she had been told.

Most of Harry's tale centered on Hogwarts. He told his parents how he knew nothing about magic until Hagrid came to deliver his Hogwarts letters. He described the letter chase and Hagrid's grand entrance, getting laughs from all. He told them of his first trip to Diagon Alley and his first ride on the Hogwarts express where he met Hermione. He told them of what he thought of the young girl at the time. He thought she was a little bossy and loved to show off all she knew, but she was also kind and caring, at least to him, so whatever flaws she had paled in comparison to her. He wanted to be her friend,

but he was eleven and she was a girl and his other friend didn't like her at all.

He told them of his sorting and how the hat wanted to place him in Slytherin but that he wanted nothing to do with any house that claimed one Draco Malfoy as a member. He told them he managed to convince the hat not to send him into that house and how he was then sorted into Gryffindor.

He told them of the Troll and how that incident convinced him to be her friend no matter what anyone else thought. He told them about the rest of his First Year culminating with his fight with Professor Quirrell who was then possessed by Voldemort.

He told them of his first summer as a wizard. He started with an incident at Privet Drive and the House Elf Dobby, and followed with his imprisonment and his ultimate escape in the back of a flying car. He told them about his time at the Burrow. He told them how Dobby had tried to keep him from returning to school and how he and Ron stole Ron's Dad's flying car and chased after the Hogwarts Express and how they crashed into the Whomping Willow.

He told them of Second Year and the mysterious petrifications. He told them he discovered he was a parsletongue, which it was believed was a result of Voldemort's failed attempt to murder him as a baby. He told them about how Hermione, Ron and he tried to figure out what was going on and how Hermione found out, but got petrified by whatever was roaming the school. He told them of the hours he sat beside her in the hospital wing and how Madam Pomphrey ignored the rules to allow him to stay with her. He admitted that had he had a clue, he would have known then that he loved her.

He told them about the Chamber of Secrets and his confrontation with a reforming Voldemort and the huge Basilisk. Some of the things he said he hadn't even told Hermione. He then told them about how he tricked Lucius Malfoy into freeing his Elf Dobby.

His tale of Third Year centered on Quidditch, Dementors and meeting James' old friend Remus and Sirius. He told them that Remus was one of the best professors he ever had, McGonagall being the other.



He told them how Remus had taught him the Patronus Charm and how he ultimately used it against hundreds of Dementors to save Sirius's life. He told them also how he and Hermione helped Sirius escape after he had been captured and sentenced to death.

Fourth Year was all about the Tri-Wizard Tournament. He began with the Quidditch World Cup, as it fit into the story at some point. He told them about the tournament, the students from Beauxbatons and Durmstrang and how his name appeared from the Goblet of Fire as a Fourth Champion. He told them he had nothing to do with that and told everyone, but the only one who would listen was Hermione. She helped him prepare for all of the challenges he faced that year and Harry could not stop praising her despite her blushing and attempts at modesty.

He told them about the First Challenge and how that went. He also told them of his first of several brushes with the Press that year and the scandalous articles they wrote about him and Hermione. Of course, he conceded, it should have been obvious to him that there was more truth in those articles than he and Hermione were willing to admit at the time.

He told them about the Yule Ball and how stupid he now feels about not having asked Hermione to go with him then. He told them in great detail how beautiful she looked that night and how that night was the first time he saw her as more than just a friend. He now saw her as a beautiful young woman. He told them about the Second Task that soon followed and how he tried to rescue all the captives and did rescue two of them.

He did not tell them much about the Third Task. He merely stated that he and Cedric Diggory got to the center of the maze at the same time and agreed to take the Cup together. He told them it was a portkey and it brought them to Voldemort. He told them how Cedric died and then about the terrifying ritual that brought Voldemort back to life. He then told them about the duel he had with Voldemort and how it ended with him escaping back to Hogwarts with Cedric's body. He then told them how everything happened. The new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher was supposed to be Alastor Moody. It was really an escaped Death Eater named Barty Crouch, Jr. under

polyjuice potion for the entire year. He then told them about how Crouch was executed before he could be properly questioned and the Ministries attempts from that point on to cover up the truth, including the Demeter attack on him and Dudley and the trial before the whole Wizengamot.

In addition to his encounter with the dementors, Harry told them about the summer before his Fifth Year. He told them about how he had been deliberately kept in the dark and how his friends had been told to avoid answering his questions. He told them about his stay at Grimmauld Place and how Sirius was for all practical purposes imprisoned in that terrible place. He told them about how angry he was at just about everyone for just about everything and how hard it was for him to realize that not everyone was conspiring against him.

His tale of Fifth Year was the most complex yet. It was, in essence, three stories in one. The first was the story about the Ministry and its attempt to discredit both Harry and Dumbledore and hide the fact that Voldemort had returned and the Death Eaters were active again. This tale included the insertion of Dolores Umbridge into the staff at Hogwarts, her schemes and machinations and her torture of Harry and other students who did not spout the Ministry's line.

The second tale was about Voldemort himself and the link that had developed between Harry and Voldemort. Harry recounted all of his dreams and visions, and in particular the vision of the attack on Arthur Weasley and how that led to the nightmare that was occlumency lessons with Professor Snape. He recounted how those lessons didn't seem to work and how they ended when Snape caught Harry sneaking a peak into his personal pensieve. Harry left out what he saw for the time being.

The third tale was about the formation of Dumbledore's Army. Harry gave Hermione a lot of credit for both the formation and the success of the club and praised its members for the progress they all made over the year. It was during the tale of the D.A. that Harry also told of his first foray into the world of romance and the utter disaster that his relationship with Cho Chang had been. As he had told Hermione earlier, he suspected the reason that relationship never worked out

was that deep down he felt disloyal to Hermione. Yet another missed clue as to how he really felt about her.

The tale of Dumbledore's Army allowed Harry to weave all three stories together as they moved inexorably towards the climax at the Department of Mysteries. From the moment he experienced the vision of Sirius being tortured, he told the story in excruciating detail. He told of his near panic and how Hermione had convinced him to try and contact Sirius first to make sure it was not a trick. He told of his later guilt at forgetting about the two-way communication mirror Sirius had given him that past Christmas and how he was tricked by the House Elf Kreacher. He told of his capture by Umbridge and the clever trick Hermione had played on the paranoid and gullible witch that left her at the mercy of the Centaurs and facilitated Harry and Hermione's escape. He told them of the four others who insisted upon helping him even though he really did not any one of them at risk.

He told them of the flight on the Thestrals and their search of the Department of Mysteries that led them to the Hall of Prophecies where Sirius was supposed to be and how he was not there at all - but a prophecy about Harry was there. He told them of the arrival of the Death Eaters led by Lucius Malfoy and Bellatrix LaStrange and how he and his five comrades, the oldest of which were only sixteen, fought twice their number in a running battle for ages. He then reached the hardest parts of the fight and fought not to lose control. He told them of the curse that had taken Hermione down and how he was sure for a moment that she was dead and how he had given up all hope until Neville told him she was still alive. He told them of the two Death Eaters who paid for that with their lives. He then told him about the climax of the fight, Neville and he were cornered in the Death Chamber when the Order finally showed up. He told them how Sirius died.

He told them how he chased Bellatrix, Sirius's murderer and hit her with the Cruciatus Curse. He knew it had worked as he saw her eyes roll back in excruciating pain. He just was unable to sustain the curse long enough to totally incapacitate her. He told them of Voldemort's arrival and the subsequent fight with him and then Dumbledore leading to Voldemort's attempt at possessing him and how he was

able to drive the person out. Hermione! It was thoughts of her that had driven Voldemort out and, he knew, caused the evil git far more pain that he had caused to Bellatrix.

He told them of the fight with Dumbledore in the Headmaster's Office following their return to Hogwarts and of the Prophecy that had cost him so much over the course of his life. He told them that while Dumbledore answered many questions that night, each answer generated even more questions and how he began to question everything that had happened to him since that horrible Halloween night so many years ago.

He told them how none of it mattered when he saw Hermione in the Hospital Wing and was told that no one knew if she would survive. He told them how he never left her side, except for certain functions that required a momentary absence and how that by seeing her there and realizing she might not come back to him, he realized what he should have known for ages. He knew that he loved her and he knew that he had to tell her regardless of what she felt for him. If she came back, he would tell her immediately.

He told them of when she finally woke up and that he told her all he had been keeping inside of him for so long. He told them of her response and both how relieved and stupid he felt. He was relieved she felt the same way about him and stupid that he had waited so long and that it took nearly losing her for him to finally open up to the only person he ever truly trusted with his heart. He also made sure they knew of the reaction of his other "best friend."

He then told them of the last couple of days. He told them of his "talk" with Hermione's father and his statement that he would not marry her "tomorrow" and then how that's exactly what happened as they bonded less than twenty-four hours later. He told them of his "final escape" from the Dursleys and his feelings when he saw Hermione had been brought to the Manor as well. He told them of all that Tonks had told Hermione and him about Dumbledore and the real plans the Old Man had for him. He told them of the plot to see him killed and see Dumbledore acquire control over the Potter Estate and the part the Weasleys were to play in that plot. He told them of the suspected complicity of the two he considered friends and wondered openly if

they would have gone forward knowing the fate that awaited them both at Dumbledore's and their Mother's hands. He told them of how Sirius and the others had uncovered the plot and planned to thwart it and how he now had come into his inheritance and the Black Estate as well.

By the time Harry had finished, Hermione was sitting in his lap and silently crying into his shoulder. Harry's mother was crying more opening into his other shoulder telling him how she never wanted any of this for her son nor that any person should have had to endure what he had to. His grandmother was also with him, also silently weeping. His father and grandfather, however, looked like they were ready to kill. For Harry, however, the fact that he had let it all out actually had been a cathartic experience and he actually felt better than he had in ages, if ever.

"If only I were real!" James Potter growled. "They would all pay!"

"What do you intend to do, Harry?" Charles Potter asked.

"The specific tactics? I don't know yet," Harry admitted. "I've got a lot to learn before I can set forth on details. Generally, I know one thing: neither Dumbledore and his Order nor Voldemort and his Death Eaters can be allowed to win in the end. They both must be defeated utterly. In the latter case, they need to be wiped from the face of the earth. When the time comes, the Death Eaters and their lines will be extinguished. For those who took the Mark, there will be no mercy, no quarter and no exceptions.

"However, more important is the total defeat of this Pureblood nonsense. Unless that way of thinking is even deader than you are, we merely postpone the fight until the next Dark Lord arises. The Pureblood agenda must be extinguished before there can be any hope for us at all. That means it has to be exposed for what it is and the rest of our society must rise up in righteous indignation and wipe it from the face of the Earth.

"Consequently, the initial primary target will be Dumbledore and the Order. I do not plan open combat, but subtlety. I want them

disorganized and divided such that they cannot operate effectively. How? I don't know yet. Why? To stoke the flames of revolution, the Wizarding World needs to see what Pureblood control really means, if only for a moment. Dumbledore is too sly to show his hand until all is within his control. Voldemort, on the other hand, is not. By undermining the Order, I will ensure Voldemort's success for a time. His depredations and those of his loyal minions should open eyes and provide me with a recruiting base. I will try and damage his side as well so that he lacks the ability to entrench, but he must be allowed a modicum of success as I see it. Once his side gains control, all hell will break loose and from that hell I can recruit a very pissed off army with which to strike back.

"That will take some time," Charles noted.

"I have been brought to the Estate because it is as safe a place as there is for me. I cannot be attacked here and even if all Britain falls to Voldemort, I remain safe and secure here. Time is something I now have. I intend to move as quickly as possible, but that will still be slowly and carefully.

"But that's for later. In the interim, I learn and train so that when I decide to enter the fray, I am ready. Of most immediate concern is my sister..."

"S-sister?" Lily asked.

"What sister?" Charles added.

"Clarice Anne Potter," Harry said. "She was born in September 1981. She was sent up for adoption less than a month after Voldemort tried to kill me. Dumbledore somehow retained his guardianship over her and now is trying to sell her as a concubine. If I have to, I will buy her. I prefer finding her first and bringing her under the protection of my House."

"We had a daughter, James," Lily hitched.

"S-so it would seem," he replied. "You will find her, won't you son?"

“Hopefully within a week or so,” Harry said.

“If y-you do,” Lily asked, “could you bring her to m-meet us?”

“I will, Mum.”

“Thank you, Harry!” she said hugging her son tightly.

The conversation moved to less heavy subjects. Lily and Samantha gathered Hermione off in one corner to grill her about children, practically begging her for a child in the near future and embarrassing poor Hermione to no end. Hermione knew it was not out of spite but just good natured teasing. Still, as they were asking very intimate questions and revealing more than she wanted to know about their own husbands’ abilities in regards to sex, she was more than a little put off.

The elder Potters dragged their heir off and after a brief grilling about Hermione, the conversation drifted first to Quidditch and then to the Estate. Harry had to put up with his own Dad accusing him of moving from first kiss to married in under a week that was until his own father reminded him that he went from first kiss to married in under two hours.

“At least Harry here made some effort to court the young lady,” Charles scolded.

“Oi!,” James protested. “I made an effort! Lily just shot me down over and over again!”

“Had Hermione shot me down,” Harry admitted, “I would have taken it as final.”

“Why?” James asked.

“One, because that’s the way she is. Two, because she says I’m too bloody noble for my own good. She loves and hates that about me as that term also includes what she calls my ‘saving people thing’ which

always leads me into trouble and life and death stuff. She loves that about me as well, but it also bothers the hell out of her. I can't help it and she knows it. She puts up with it and tries to reign it in which is one of the many things I love about her."

"Damn you're whipped," James quipped.

"Bloody hell!" a new voice called out. "This is not bloody pensieve memory!"

Harry and the other turned and saw Remus.

"Moony!" James exclaimed.

"Prongs?" Remus said misty eyed. "Is that really you?"

"It's a projection of all I was when this was made, Mate," James said. "You'll need to ask Dad about it. Apparently the real me is toes up, pushing up daisies, food for maggots and weevils, six feet under and all of that. My last memory was fall 1980 and for me I last saw you about a week or two ago. 'Though Harry here tells me it's been almost fifteen years."

"Remus," Charles said, "it's good to see you. Harry here tells us you're helping him?"

Remus nodded.

"Moony!" Lily shrieked and ran up to hug her friend. "It's so good of you to drop by!"

"Th-this is unreal," Remus said as he looked at his old and long dead friends.

"Not that I'm complaining," Harry said, "but what brought you here, Professor?"

"Harry, I'm not your professor anymore," Remus complained.



“From what you told us earlier, that’s about to change.”

Remus nodded. “Still, I would prefer you call me Moony.”

“Fine.”

“And I’ll call you either the Hermione Pleaser or Sex Machine.”

“What?” Harry and others called out.

“Something happened when Hermione and Harry bonded,” Remus explained. “They did not know what so I reviewed Hermione’s memories of the whole event. Damn Cub! Eight times in under six hours? And it was both of your first times? That’s not normal.”

“Tonks believes it has something to do with the fact that he is a metamorphagus,” Hermione explained.

“Really?” James asked. “Any other hidden talents?”

“I’m an excellent cook and can play piano,” Harry said.

“I’ve heard him play,” Hermione said. “As for cooking?”

“Breakfast tomorrow,” Harry said. “I’d do dinner tonight, but Elda might be upset by that.”

“You’re on!”

“Okay,” James said, “why were you watching memories of my son and his Consort getting it on?”

“As I said, something strange happened when they finally bonded,” Remus said. “I needed to find out what and why. Hermione? Do you recognize this symbol?” Remus held up a piece of parchment with an odd symbol on it.

Hermione nodded. "It's a rune. Druidic in origin. It's called 'Alara' and is the symbol for love and purity."

"Just before your last time in the memory, the time where you recited the oath and bound to him, you traced this on his chest three times. Why?"

"I was thinking about what he meant to me," she replied. "This rune defined all he means to me and more. So I did that as a sign of what I was thinking, even if he didn't know. It meant something to me."

"Whether you intended to or not, by doing that and then - er - shagging him senseless, you performed an ancient druidic purification rite. It had many uses, but it was considered particularly effective at driving out evil spirits. That, in essence, is what happened. You confirmed some suspicions Dumbledore had regarding Voldemort and the main reason the Old Man believes Harry must die."

"I d-did?"

Remus nodded. "Do any of you know what a horcrux is?"

"A right nasty piece of work that," Charles Potter began. "Simply put, it is an enchanted object created by the darkest of magic. It is a physical container designed to hold a piece of its creator's soul. So long as it holds that piece and remains intact, the soul fragment anchors the rest of the person's soul to this earth. His body can be destroyed, but the soul cannot escape so he can come back from the dead under the right circumstances.

"The spell that prepares the Horcrux itself is fairly benign. But to rent one's soul requires a brutal, self-inflicted spell after the creator has committed a most evil act of cruelty, one which would break the heart of most. Cold blooded murder, killing a family member, rape of one who trusted you, any of these can rent a soul and allow for the creation of one of those abominations. Supposedly, it made the evil bastard immortal.

“The problem was coming back. The easiest way was to allow another to take possession of the horcrux. If they placed too much desire into its use or possession, the soul fragment could take possession of the person. It could then use that person’s life force to draw the rest of its soul into it and recreate it’s lost body from the magic. The downside to this method would be the destruction of the horcrux itself as the soul would be fully reunited.

“The preferred way was to create a wholly new body without using the horcrux itself. This would not reunite the soul, but it would preserve the horcrux. There was a downside to this method as well as the evil one had to have outside help to perform the necessary ritual.”

“That’s what happened in the Chamber,” Harry exclaimed! “And in the graveyard!”

Remus nodded. “Dumbledore suspects as much. He figures Voldemort made more than one Horcrux. More than one would allow the bastard to use either method to come back. He could afford to lose one without losing the protections.”

“Tom Riddle’s Diary was one, wasn’t it?”

“Fair bet.”

“How many did the bastard make?” Charles Potter asked.

“The Old Man suspects six,” Remus said. “Including what remains, that gives him seven soul bits. Powerful magic in that number.”

“And Harry was one of those bits?” Hermione asked.

“I suspect and I believe the Old Man suspects he is the eighth bit. Big reason why he wants Harry dead. No one has ever made more than one of those vile things that we know of. Moreover, no one has ever used a living thing as one as the death of the thing would break the charm. The Old Man suspects that Harry was an accident. Therein lies the key.

“The purification ritual resulted in the destruction of a soul fragment. The sources I read confirmed the effect. There is a theory in the main source that should some idiot make more than one of those vile things, they are connected to each other somehow. Should one be destroyed by love magic such as the purification ritual, it would set off a chain reaction that would destroy all horcruxes and prevent the creation of a new one. The purification ritual is just such a form of magic. Mind you, this is only a theory as no one is known to have made more than one of those things. Still, it is possible that you two accidentally made Voldie mortal again and there’s now not a damn thing he can do to change that.”

“So Voldemort’s mortal now?” Harry asked.

“It’s just a theory, Harry. What happened to you suggests a basis, but there is no known precedent for multiple Horcrux’s. Still, there is hope that it’s more than a theory. As we speak, the Old Man is out hunting for at least one of them and trying to gather information about the others. If the one he seeks proves to have been destroyed, then it is possible that Voldie is exposed.”

Harry grunted. “Mortal does not equal exposed. Not yet. His soul may no longer be anchored, but he still has Death Eaters. He will not be truly vulnerable until they are whittled down to a manageable size.”

“Good point,” Remus agreed.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79).  
Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER  
6/23/96.

Nymphadora (Dora) Tonks, age 21 (7/12/74); Title of Interest to Sirius  
Black 3/18/74; Concubine By Proxy (Remus Lupon) to Sirius Black  
6/20/87; Bound to Sirius Black, 7/22/93; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF  
BLACK 6/24/96.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE MATRONS

TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2006. Potter Manor.

Harry, Hermione and Remus spent the next couple of hours visiting with the projections of his parents and grandparents. Harry learned that this special pensieve was made just for that purpose and was made just before his parents were sent off to Godric's Hollow. His grandfather did not trust Dumbledore and was concerned that the move would one day bode ill for his family. James had agreed in principal and managed to convince a reluctant Lily to participate. Harry's grandparents had made it a point to update their projections each year after Harry's parents' murder just in case one or the both of them passed away before they found him.

The other point to the pensieve was to allow Harry's Grandfather to "train" Harry as he was the new Lord Potter. This would entail teaching him the secrets of the Manor, his role in the Wizengamot and other things that are not taught anywhere else. Harry agreed to add almost daily visits to the Pensieve for him and Hermione to learn the ins and outs of his heritage.

Eventually, the real humans felt the need for sustenance and bade the projection farewell for the time being. Remus left the Manor for the house he now occupied some miles away. Harry and Hermione dined with Tonks. They discussed summoning the other two concubines that evening. Tonks thought it was prudent, but asked permission to leave the Manor as she had been invited to visit with her parents. She agreed to await the arrival of the other two women and escort them to the Library before leaving for the evening and much of the next day. She cheekily confessed that she was going to miss her Harry shag.

After dinner, she explained to Harry exactly how to summon the two women. He touched their stone with his wand tip and said either "To me," which would bring the woman to wherever he was or "To the Manor" which would bring them to the Conservatory on the Ground Floor. It was agreed that they would try the latter for now. Hermione stated that she needed to change and left for a time before returning in a silk robe and slippers. She told Harry that he should probably

bond with Mallory first. Then he could bond Mallory to the Potter line by having a good time with Hermione. Harry would then bond with “MGM” and use Mallory to bond her to the Black line. With the plan in place, Harry activated his ring.

Healer Mallory Grant had just returned to her London flat after a particularly long shift at St. Mungos Hospital for Magical Maladies. All she wanted to do now was soak in a bath for ages and then get some sleep. Fortunately, she did not have to work the next day so she could sleep late. She was so looking forward to a long night's sleep. To her surprise, she felt the black collar around her neck vibrate. Someone was summoning her.

Her first thought that it had to be Remus. Her Lord and Master was recently reported dead, killed in a desperate fight with Death Eaters in the Ministry of Magic itself. No new Lord Black had been named so the sharing her old Master allowed probably remained in effect. She didn't mind. Remus was once good to her.

Her second thought scared her, however. The rumors were already circulating as to who the new Lord Black would be. The prevalent one was a young man named Draco Malfoy. His father was a known Death Eater and it was said he was even worse than his father. Mallory was a Muggle Born witch and knew the attitude those bastards had toward people like her. She hoped this was not her new Master because the best she could hope for from him was a short and unpleasant life. Still, she had to answer the summons. She did her best to put on a brave face as she touched her invisible collar and was immediately transported away.

It had been a long day for the older woman. She sat at her desk going through yet another pile of paperwork. All day, she sifted through reports, lists, invoices, and other documents in need of her attention. It was a tedious yet necessary task. Still, on days like today, she wished her immediate superior took a greater interest in the day-to-day administration. The truth was, he had little or not interest in such mundane chores and left it all in her “capable hands.”

Years ago, after a day like today she could look forward to an evening in the arms of her Master. While she was a concubine, her two Masters had always treated her kindly and with affection. With them she had felt loved. After decades as a slave, her only real regret was that she had not been afforded the privilege of children. Her first Master's wife had flat out forbidden it and by the time she passed to his son, it was too late for her.

Her last Master had died almost eight years ago. She knew he had an heir, she actually knew the lad. But it would be at least another year before the young man could hope to inherit his family estate. Besides, she was fifty-three years older than the boy. She doubted he would take any interest in her.

As her mind wandered remembering her times in her first Master's bed, she felt her black collar vibrate. This cannot be possible, she thought. The boy lives with Muggles. He does not know about his heritage or his inheritance and certainly has been forbidden access to knowledge about our culture - especially our slave culture. But the old concubine was being summoned and the slave bond compelled her to comply. She went to her bedchamber and changed her clothes into something more flattering and less boring. She dressed as if she was about to go on a date. She also let her long hair loose from its normal bun and spent a few minutes brushing it out. She then touched her invisible collar and was gone.

Mallory watched in dread as the familiar sights of her flat disappeared and a new place appeared around her. She was in a huge room, not unlike a lobby of an old and fancy hotel. There were exotic plants all around interspersed with couches, tables and chairs. She knew this was no hotel. It was the residence of whomever had summoned her. It told her one thing: whomever had called was extremely wealthy.

This merely confirmed her worst fears. The new Lord Black was rumored to be Draco Malfoy, the only son of one Lucius Malfoy. The Malfoy's were notorious supporters of You-Know-Who and claimed to be the wealthiest family in Wizarding Britain. Since no one said they were not, their claims were seen as truth and this place she was now in screamed of wealth.



There was a slight breeze and she heard a woman's voice say: "Interesting." The woman was standing not too far behind her and Mallory turned around. Although the taller woman was older than Mallory remembered and the hair was different, far more feminine than Mallory ever remembered on this woman, she recognized her. "P-Professor McGonagall?" she asked.

The older witch turned to the younger one. McGonagall recognized her as a former student from years before but could not place a name with the face to save her life. It was almost embarrassing for her as she almost always remembered her students. "Aye," she replied.

"Mallory Grant," the younger witch said. "I did my last two years at Hogwarts, finished in '75. Hufflepuff." McGonagall picked up a slight hint of fear in the younger witch's voice.

"Ah yes!" she said with a genuine smile. "I remember now. Sorry, but it's been so long and, well, I'm not as young as I once was. You wanted to become a Healer, right?"

She could see the younger witch relax just a little. She could also see a sense of pride on her face. "And I did. Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and I also practice pediatric Healing. I trained at St. Mungo's but got my Certs in the States."

McGonagall nodded. "I always enjoy seeing former students who truly put their talents to good use."

"W-Why are you here?" Mallory asked.

"Probably for the same reason as you," McGonagall replied.

Mallory almost gasped. That meant that McGonagall was also a concubine. She obviously was not a Black concubine. Mallory would have known that. That meant she had to be...

"H-Have you been here before?"

McGonagall nodded. "Until about eight years ago, this was my home." Mallory noted McGonagall was tearing up a little.

"Is this ... Is this Malfoy Manor?"

"Goodness no!" McGonagall almost laughed. "I would not be caught dead in that pauper's shack!"

"Then where are we?"

"I cannot say." The concubine bond prevented her from revealing more. The questions were enough to show that Mallory was unaware of the Potter Estate which was one of McGonagall's former Master's secrets. Likewise the bond prevented her from revealing that she was, in fact, a concubine and to whom she was bound.

"Why did you think this might be the Malfoy Estate?" McGonagall asked.

"I cannot say." It was also obvious to Mallory that her former teacher was unaware of the Black Estate or its secrets.

"There you are!" a new voice called cheerfully. The two women turned to see the new arrival. They both saw a young, well endowed woman with shoulder length light brown hair. They both knew who she was and she them.

"Merlin's Beard!" the new woman exclaimed and then began to giggle.

"Is something funny, Auror Tonks?" McGonagall asked.

"I would say something is, Professor McGonagall," Tonks replied. "Oh I would die to see the expressions on their faces when they see you!"

"What are you talking about, Dora?" Mallory asked.

“You’ll see,” Tonks giggled again. “I’d like to stay and chat, really I would. But I’m just here to see to it you get to where you need to go. His Lordship has allowed me to leave to visit my folks. Of course, had I known about this - er - development, I would have gone some other time. But I didn’t and I did promise Mum and Dad I’d pop ‘round and spend time with them. Maybe I can ask for a pensieve memory when I get back?”

“Dora, please? Where are we?”

“You’ll see, Mal. Professor? I assume you know your way around this place?”

“It’s been several years but I think I can manage.”

“Do you remember where the Library is?”

“That I do. My second favorite room in the Manor.”

“Hmmm. Well, I think you’ll find it’s her Ladyship’s favorite. Please lead Mal there and have a seat on one of the couches. His Lordship will join you momentarily.”

The walk to the Library stunned Mallory. The Manor was more like a palace and larger than any “home” she had ever been to or even imagined. After passing through a few large rooms, all elegant and furnished in a manner that screamed “wealth,” they arrived at a large set of double wooden doors that had to be more than twice as tall as she was and intricately carved. McGonagall opened one of the doors and led Mallory into one of the largest libraries she had ever seen. Even here, the solid wood paneling, book cases and furnishings were far more than purely functional.

“Sweet Morgana!” she gasped seeing the countless books and rich appointments of this huge room. Fortunately, there were reading couches near the door and she followed McGonagall over to one of them. The couch faced the door and there were two high backed chairs facing the couch.

“It’s said to be the largest in all of Wizarding Britain,” McGonagall said. “Its magical collection alone is larger than either Hogwarts or the Ministry itself.”

“Goodness,” was all Mallory could say in reply.

Harry and Hermione descended what he now thought of as the Grand Stair to the “Public” rooms on the Ground Floor. Harry was dressed in a Polo shirt, a nice pair of trousers and loafers while Hermione wore only a light blue, silk robe and matching slippers. Harry had told her she looked “really hot” in her robe and that he could not wait to get her out of it. But Hermione told him to behave, so Harry did.

They reached the doors to the Library and opened one of them. Sitting on a large, leather couch facing the doors were the two ladies they had come to meet. One of them they recognized instantly. Hermione gasped in surprise while Harry’s jaw merely dropped. Then he began to chuckle a little.

“W-what?” Hermione asked.

“Past few days, every time I thought my life could not get any more surreal, it does,” Harry admitted. “I have to bond with Professor McGonagall?” It was a rhetorical question. They both knew that he did.

The two ladies now noticed the young couple slowly approaching them. They both knew who Harry was. McGonagall had known him for years as a student and Mallory from all the pictures of him in the press. McGonagall was not surprised it was Harry, after all he was the only person who could possibly lay claim to the title of Lord Potter. McGonagall was more than a little surprised to see Hermione with him dressed in what she knew were a Consort’s Robes. Mallory was surprised to see the famous Harry Potter. Everyone believed that Draco Malfoy was destined to be the next Lord Black.

The couple walked up to the couch and Harry looked at Mallory first. "Good evening," he said trying his best to maintain his composure. "You must be Mallory Grant." He extended his hand to her and she took it, surprised at the gentleness she felt in the innocent touch.

"I am," she replied softly.

"Sirius never mentioned you to me before," Harry said. "I was told he was going to introduce us this summer but..."

Harry noticed there were tears in Mallory's eyes.

"He left me several letters regarding things," Harry went on. "You were mentioned prominently. Based upon that had what Dora has told me, you're quite an impressive woman."

"Thank you," Mallory replied.

"In case he didn't tell you, Sirius loved you very much."

"Thank you," was all Mallory could say.

Harry turned to the older witch. "Professor McGonagall? If I didn't know better, I'd say my ancestors pranked me but good!" There was a laugh in his voice.

"Mr. Potter," she replied curtly, trying to maintain her professional demeanor. "Might I ask what is going on? And why is Ms. Granger here?"

"Given your manner of arrival, I think what is going on should be fairly obvious. It's clearly a surprise to me, though. Your initials are 'MGM,' are they not?"

McGonagall nodded.

Harry touched his Potter ring brining the MGM face to the fore and showed it to his Professor. "Just out of curiosity," he said noticing her eyes widen just a little, "what does the 'G' stand for?"

“G-Grace,” McGonagall replied.

“Minerva Grace,” Harry thought aloud. “That is a nice name, really!”

“Th-thank you, Milord,” McGonagall replied with a slight smile breaking her usually stern face.

“I should introduce myself properly,” Harry went on. “I am Harry James Potter, Lord Potter and Head of the Ancient and Most Noble House of Potter by birth and emancipation and Lord Black, Head of the Ancient and Most Noble House of Black by law and pursuant to the provisions in the Will of my predecessor in title, Lord Sirius Orion Black.”

“I thought Draco Malfoy was to become the next Lord Black,” Mallory blurted.

“Disappointed, are we?”

“N-no, Milord. Not at all.”

“And what made you think that ferret would be Lord Black?”

“It’s the rumor of the day. Everyone thinks it was to be him.”

“A rumor he started no doubt,” Harry said. “Fraid he’s in for a huge disappointment when the Will is made public in about two weeks. Malfoy has been disinherited. Something to do with being Death Eater spawn, I believe.”

McGonagall could not help but chuckle at that. “Sirius said he had big plans for you,” she said. “For once he wasn’t joking.”

Harry nodded. “Which is why you two are here,” he went on. “You are both bound concubines, one to the House of Black and the other to the House of Potter.”

“And Miss Granger?” McGonagall asked.

“My apologies, Love,” Harry said to Hermione kissing her cheek. “Ladies, this is the love of my life, my Consort, Hermione the Lady Potter.”

“I didn’t even know you two were a couple,” McGonagall said stunned.

“That is a recent development,” Harry replied. “We began ‘dating’ about a week ago.”

“And you’re already bonded?” Mallory asked.

“Little over two days,” Harry said with a smile. “We’d been denying our true feelings for one another for years. So once we finally owned up to them...” Harry shrugged.

“Hate to tell you this, you two,” McGonagall said, “but everyone has known you two had strong feelings for each other for some time. I wonder who won the pool?”

“Pool?” Hermione asked.

“There’s a pool as to when the two of you would stop evading the obvious and get together. Person closest to the date you two finally figured it out wins. I think the pool was up to two hundred Galleons. I figured it would be sometime next year, so...”

“People were betting on that?” Hermione sounded almost insulted.

McGonagall nodded.

“Honestly!” Hermione huffed as she sat in one of the chairs facing the women. Harry took the other one. Hermione looked at Harry questioningly.

"I didn't know about the pool, love," Harry replied. "Had I known, I would probably have bet on either 'tomorrow' or 'never'."

"Why?"

"Tomorrow, because maybe seeing what everyone thought, I would have seen the truth. Never because until you were hit in the Department of Mysteries, I was not going to tell you how I felt for fear of ruining the relationship we did have. It meant that much to me that I would not take any risk to harm it."

"I am glad you told me," Hermione smiled. "I'm not sure I could have told you unless ... unless I believed one of us was dying."

"Best impulsive thing I've ever done," Harry laughed. "But enough about us. Mallory? Dora told us a fair bit about you. Specifically, that you were a birthday present and that Sirius shared you with my father and Remus Lupin for some time. Still...how'd you become a concubine and how'd you become Sirius's concubine?"

"I was a Muggle Born," Mallory began. "I was born January 23rd, 1957. My family was fairly comfortable. My Dad was a Doctor and had a good practice. I was the oldest of four children. After me there were my brothers Michael and John and my younger sister Allison. They were magical like me as well."

"I was sold at Auction in July of 1972 when I was fifteen. At the time, I had no idea about any of this. I was sold to a man named Chance Virola, who was one nasty piece of work. My bonding was violent and I was violated in every way by the man that first night. He also gave me a good beating. Nothing too serious, but I was sufficiently battered and bruised that sending me home was not an option. As a result, I've never seen my family since. I spent the rest of that horrid summer with him being gang raped by him and his friends and whored out for money.

"Fortunately, the law required him to send me back to school through my Fifth Year. As I had brothers and sisters in magical school, he could not send me to the same school they were attending. I did



my first four years and St. Georges School of Magic near London. I was transferred to Hogwarts for my last three years.

“During the fall term of my sixth year, my first Master fell on hard times. My Christmas Hols were spent on my back, knees or belly as he whored me out in an attempt to pay off his debts. I was servicing at least twenty men per day. It didn’t help him a bit as many of my ‘customers’ were his friends and acquaintances who refused to pay.

“I was sold the following March. I was purchased by Lord Orion Black as a birthday present for his young son who had just turned thirteen. It was a Friday night just after dinner when I was summoned. It was March 18th as I recall. I found myself in a small flat. There was a kitchen, bath living room and two bedrooms. I later learned it was atop Honeydukes in Hogsmeade. The Honeydukes had lived there when they were younger, but as their family outgrew the place, they built a nice house on the edge of town and rented out their old flat. Lord Black was renting it for his son.

“I arrived and there was Lord Black and a boy. He told me he had bought me from my former Master and that he was giving me to the boy as a birthday present. I was to make a man out of him and teach him all about women and sex. He then signed the papers over to his son Sirius and left.”

“Where did you live?” Hermione asked.

“During the Hols, with Sirius. At first that was mostly Grimmauld Place, but after his falling out with his Mum the summer after his fifth year it was with James Potter and his family. When I started Healer training, which was before Sirius moved to the Potters, I lived in our flat above Honeydukes.

“After Sirius was sent to Azkaban, the older Potters allowed me to stay on at the estate. They had moved into the Manor when James’s Grandfather passed and I was allowed to stay in their old place. I tried. It was too hard. Too many memories.

“In 1983, I took a job at a magical hospital in the States and left Britain. I then decided to get a Muggle degree and became a Muggle Doctor as well. I thought at the time it was for good. In early 1993, I got a strange urge to return. I moved back during the summer, getting a job at St. Mungo’s and renting a nice flat in London. A month after I moved back, Sirius escaped from Azkaban.

“He summoned me a day or so after he escaped. He was hiding in a cave, dressed naught in rags. He was emaciated, sick, filthy and stank to high heaven. When I saw it was him, I ran into his arms and snogged him senseless. The cheeky bugger said he was glad to see me too.

“I took him back to the Potter Estate, to the house where he lived until he was sent to prison. I helped him get well and did my best to fatten him up a bit. I wondered how he managed to escape and he told me. Honestly! After all our years together! He never told me he was an animagus. Useful skill that.

“Two weeks after we got back together, for that’s how we thought of it, he began going out on his ‘missions.’ I worried for him, but he always told me what he was doing and why and I agreed it was more important than a lot of things. He had three immediate missions and one long term. First and foremost was to locate and look in on his godson. Second was to find his goddaughter, third was to find and capture Peter Pettigrew and prove his innocence, finally was to bring Dumbledore down once and for all. To the best of my ability, I helped him. I knew my way around the child laws and adoption as a pediatric Healer, but I lacked the clout to get my hands on sealed adoption records. I was only able to confirm that your sister had been adopted through Ministry Child Welfare in March of 1982 following a placement in November the previous year.”

“So she’s being raised as a witch?” Harry asked.

“So it would seem. Where and by whom is another question altogether.”

Harry nodded. "So - er - Professor?" He was now looking at McGonagall. "There were some reference materials from my Grandfather that referred to a 'Minnie.' Is that you?"

McGonagall nodded.

"Would you mind if I called you that? In private, of course."

"N-no, Milord."

"Was Great-granddad your first Master?"

McGonagall nodded.

"And you loved him very much, right?"

Another nod.

"And Granddad?"

"I was fond of him. His heart belonged to Sammy, though. Still, he was kind to me always and took me into his bed from time to time when he inherited me. I have no complaints there.

"And my grandmother?"

"She and I were close friends. I'm pretty sure if that was not the case, she would have taken issue with me. She was not the kind of person who would willingly share her husband. She made an exception for me given that I would have had to have been sold."

"Where did you live?"

"Until Charles and Sammy passed, here in the Manor."

"Even after you became a Professor?" Hermione asked in shock.

McGonagall nodded. "Only Dumbledore, Professor Trelawney, Hagrid and Mr. Filch call the place home year round. Professor's Flitwick, Snape, Sinestra and Vector and Madam Pomphrey are there from September first until the Summer Hols. The rest of us have three to four nights a weeks when we can live somewhere else. The Headmaster as a way of getting hold of us if we are needed on our nights off. I moved out of this Manor after your grandparents died. It didn't feel right. But I took a place in Pottersport because I enjoyed the sense of a home. Besides, Dumbledore thinks I have a family - which is sort of true as I am a Potter in all but name."

"And where would you like to live now?"

"With your permission, Milord, here?"

"And you, Mallory?"

Mallory nodded.

"Good. While Hermione is the love of my life, I would like to think that by bonding with me you are part of our family as well. Having never truly had that, I would prefer to have you here than all over the place. Same's true for Dora and any other concubines I acquire."

"Other concubines?" McGonagall asked. "Four women is more than most have."

Harry nodded. He looked over at Hermione. They had planned this earlier and were now going to reveal it to these two women while they still remained unbound.

"There will be twenty probably," Hermione said earning a gasp from each woman, "including me and perhaps another Consort. That's ten per House. Ideally, a Consorts, eight Concubines and a Matron."

"Is there a reason for so many?" Minerva asked.

Harry held up one finger and walked off for a bit. He came back carrying a copy of the Auction Catalog. "Either of you know what this is?"

The two women shook their heads.

"It's this year's concubine auction catalog. A fair few of our friends are in it and Hermione would skin me alive if I left them to their fates."

"You know you would have bought them anyway to spare them such fates, Love," Hermione said.

"Who?" McGonagall asked.

"Seems the Old Man is having a Hogwarts sale," Harr replied. "Hermione here was one of the lots, but as you know by virtue of her bonding with me, she's off the block. Aside from her there's: Katie Bell, Cho Chang and Leanne Tinker, age 17; Hannah Abbott, Susan Bones, Lavender Brown, Tracey Davis, Parvati and Pamda Patil, and Sally-Anne Perks, age 16; Teresa Murdoch age 14; Cathy Abrams, Eleanor Branstone and Laura Madley age 13; and Laurie Preston, age 12 to name a few."

"Merlin's Beard!" Minerva exclaimed.

"Indeed," Harry said. "Seems the Old Man is strapped for cash."

"And you intend to buy them all?" Mallory asked. "How will that work?"

"Yes, all or at least most," Harry said. "There are two Slytherins on that list and ... well I generally don't like Slytherins so I may allow them to rot. As for the rest, we'll work out the logistics later."

"Any reason for the specific number?" Minerva asked.

"Numerology," Hermione said. "Harry is fated to face Voldemort and we need all the magic we can get."

“Fated?”

Harry nodded. “I’ll explain later.”

Minerva nodded.

“Including Harry, there will be twenty-one members of the combined Houses,” Hermione said. “As a odd numbered multiple of seven, that’s a magically powerful number.”

“I see.”

“You two will be Matrons,” Hermione continued. “As Matrons, you are both the oldest and most experienced concubines. As such, for your houses and in addition to your other - er - duties, you will act as kind of a House mother to the younger women.”

“And what about children?” Mallory asked.

“Sirius asked me to allow you that privilege, Mallory,” Harry said. “I am going to extend it to all women who have completed their O.W.L.s for certain. In time, all will be allowed that privilege.”

“I’d accept nothing less,” Hermione added.

“Y-you would do that f-for me?” Mallory said with a hitch in her voice?

“Sirius had two requests regarding you, Mallory,” Harry replied. “The first is that I snog you senseless. You may be older than my Mum would have been, but you’re very attractive, so that’s something I have no problem with. The second was to let you have children. Again, I have no problem with that request either.”

“Th-thank you, Milord.”

“The offer extends to you, Minnie,” Harry added.

“Which one?” Minerva asked.

“Both.”

“B-but I’m too old!”

“For what? Snogging? Sex? Children?”

“Children.” There was a hint of sadness in her voice.

“Actually, you might not be,” Hermione said. “According to the books I’ve read on bonding, the formation of a concubine bond shuts down your reproductive cycle. When was the last time you had a period?”

“I was a teenager,” Minerva said.

Hermione nodded. “The magic places your ovaries in a form of stasis. While biologically you may be older, once Harry lifts the magic, he lifts the stasis field. You are still a teenager from a reproductive standpoint.”

“So Minnie?” Harry asked, “Do you want to have a child?”

The older witch nodded. “I’ve wanted one for a long time,” she sighed.

“Right then,” Harry said. “We have to be up early tomorrow so let’s get to it.”

“Mallory Michelle Grant, I, Harry James Potter, Lord Black and Head of the Ancient and Most Noble House of Black, by virtue of my inheritance from my predecessor, Lord Sirius Orion Black, claim you by right as my Concubine in mind, body, heart, soul, and magic, as master to slave, to serve my needs and do my bidding from this day forward until death shall separate you from my House and heirs.” There was a brief flash of magic between them.

“Minerva Grace McGonagall, I, Harry James Potter, Lord Potter and Head of the Ancient and Most Noble House of Potter, by virtue of my inheritance from my predecessor, Lord Charles David Potter, claim you by right as my Concubine in mind, body, heart, soul, and magic, as master to slave, to serve my needs and do my bidding from this day forward until death shall separate you from my House and heirs.” There was another brief flash of magic between them.

Harry took off his shoes and socks. “Right then,” he commanded, “stand up and step away from the couch.”

As he did not direct the order to anyone in particular, both women stood and stepped away. Harry walked over and seemed to inspect them, devouring each with his eyes before taking Mallory into his arms. He kissed her, tentatively at first as if waiting for a response in kind. She responded and he increased the passion as his hands roamed and caressed her body. He was rewarded as she moaned into his mouth and shuddered beneath his touch. Harry noted Mallory’s breasts were slightly smaller than Hermione’s - he was now thinking of breasts on what he called in his mind ‘the Hermione Scale.’ When he broke the kiss and released her, she seemed to stagger back a couple of steps.

“Wow!” she said as she caught her breath.

Harry smiled at her and winked before moving over to McGonagall. He pulled her into an embrace and began kissing her much in the same way he had just kissed Mallory, exploring the older witch’s body with his gentle caresses and being rewarded with moans of pleasure as he found particularly sensitive spots that, naturally, garnered more attention. Her breasts were noticeably smaller than Hermione’s, but not too small in Harry’s mind. Mouth sized morsels, he thought as he rubbed her hardening nipples. She too was breathless when he finished kissing her.

He stepped back and looked at each of the older women and could see what had to be desire in their eyes. “Strip,” he commanded. Harry watched with increasing excitement as each of the women took off their clothes before him. They each first stripped down to their



undergarments. Minerva was in plain, cotton bra and knickers while Mallory was wearing a sexy red silk set, or so it appeared. Not that Harry had much time to admire them as they too were soon discarded and the two women stood naked before him. Harry could tell they were both very aroused from their obviously hard nipples to their scent. McGonagall was shaved bare, Mallory however was not. Harry asked Hermione to fix that oversight and she too was soon hairless below the neck.

Harry walked around each of them, admiring their surprisingly young looking bodies with both his eyes and hands before deciding to start in on the real fun with Mallory. Standing behind her, he began kissing her neck and fondling her breasts before slowly working his right hand down between her legs and into her sex. She moaned in anticipation and gasped with pleasure as he entered her.

“Tell me when you cum,” Harry whispered.

“Y-y-yes M-milord,” she stuttered back, her breathing already ragged from her increasing pleasure. It was not long before her moans of passion and pleasure were filling the library, urging Harry on. “S-s-soon!” she moaned.

Harry placed his mouth next to her each and whispered to the rapidly climaxing woman: “I, your Lord Black grant you, my bound Concubine, permission to bear my children.”

There was a brief flash of magic and Mallory moaned with joy and ecstasy “I’m coming!” before her legs gave out and she slowly collapsed into Harry as he gently brought her to the floor. He gave the breathless witch a kiss before turning his attention to Minerva.

Watching Harry pleasure her favorite professor was a huge turn on for Hermione. As Minerva’s pleasure grew and she moaned and gasped under Harry’s attentions, Hermione was beginning to squirm on her seat. She knew she would not be able to last until the bonding was over. She knew she would probably have not choice but to finish herself if her excitement kept going up as it had been. She heard Harry grant Minerva permission to have children and Minerva’s near

screams of ecstasy almost drove her over the edge as well. Minerva was soon seated on the couch catching her breath.

To Hermione's surprise, Harry walked over to her, still dressed. "Your turn, Love," he whispered. She leapt out of her seat and into his arms and gave him a kiss that told him about her state of desire and arousal.

"How did you know?" she asked him in a whisper as he undid her robes.

"I could sense it, I think," he said as she was now as naked as the other two women. Soon, Harry's fingers were working their magic on her. She was facing the two women and trying to watch them watch her being pleased, but it was hard to keep her eyes open for any length of time. It did not take Harry long to send her over the edge into a mind blowing, knee buckling orgasm. Harry helped her back to her seat.

Hermione watched as she caught her breath as Harry then stepped over to Mallory and faced her.

"Blow job," he commanded. She nodded and knelt down before her Master and began undoing his trousers.

"Oh my," Mallory gasped as she lowered Harry's boxers and saw his erection for the first time.

"Seems to be a Potter legacy," Minerva giggled.

Harry gave her a questioning look as he felt the now familiar sensation of a woman's mouth around his cock.

"Your grandfather and great-grandfather were well endowed as well," Minerva explained.

Having spend the better part of half an hour arousing and pleasuring three women without a release of his own, it did not take Harry long to finish. He came hard into Mallory's mouth which had expertly

pleasured his eager cock. As soon as he felt he was spent for the moment, he directed Mallory to sit on the couch and spread her legs. He knelt between them and began working her again, this time suckling her breasts as if committing them to memory with his tongue before he slid down her body to taste and pleasure her sex. As he had before, when he finally entered her he concentrated on exploring all of her as deeply as he could with his tongue. She was now thrusting into his face and it was not long before he knew she was coming.

Leaving a very surprised, sated and spent pile of witch goo catching her breath on the couch and having regained his full glory in need of more pleasuring, Harry turned to Minerva. "Suck me," he said to her. She was on her knees and in no time was eagerly attacking his cock with her mouth. Harry had to admit, she was very good at sucking cock, or at least very good at sucking his. Once again, his fifteen year old side showed itself and he came within minutes. He soon had her small breasts in his mouth and delighted at her moans and her quivers of pleasure. Having thoroughly dealt with her quite lovely breasts, he was soon working on her sex. She was almost immediate in responding to his efforts, gasping, moaning and thrusting into him. Moments after his tongue seemed to reach the back of her cave, she screamed out from her earth shaking orgasm.

Minerva sat on the couch trying to catch her breath. Harry was ready to fully consummate his bond with either of his new concubines, but he could sense the frustration and desire emanating from his consort. He wondered if she was beginning to sense his desire as well as he walked over to her knelt down and spread her legs apart. What he sensed told him foreplay was not required. She was ready. He obliged and buried his face and tongue into her sex. Eventually, he left her sweaty and gasping for air, but quite satisfied for the time being.

It was now time to consummate the bonds and Harry went to Mallory first. He gently pushed her onto her back on the couch and buried his sword into her scabbard. Whatever concerns Harry may have had about not working her up to it seemed unfounded as she responded eagerly to each and every thrust, begging him to make her come and clearly lost in her mounting pleasure. As Mallory called out during her

second orgasms, Harry followed right behind. There was a flash of magic and, as Harry looked at the exhausted yet blissful witch beneath him, he could now see her back collar with the silver scripted "B." Mallory was now bound to him.

After a lengthy cuddle while Harry both caught his breath and readied for another shag, he climbed off of Mallory and moved over to Minerva. He gave her a long, slow kiss as he slowly moved her onto her back, spread her legs and entered her. He found she was wet, waiting and at least as eager for him to bury himself inside of her as Mallory had been. What amazed Harry was how sexy the older witch really was. He had been her student for five years and had never looked at her as a sexual being, and yet she most definitely was. As he brought her to heaven, he thought that the fact that she had been his teacher, mentor, head of house at school and so forth really added to the kink factor when it came to shagging her silly. He was able to quickly bring her to a loud orgasm, yet he himself was nowhere near his own. Again, as she came for the second time, Harry unloaded into her. The black collar with the script "P" was now visible to Harry.

Several minutes of kissing and cuddling later, Harry stood up.

"Phase one of the bonding is complete," Harry announced. "Mallory? You are now bound to me and to House Black. Minnie? You are now bound to me and House Potter. You cannot betray me or your House or anyone in your House. Unfortunately, you can still betray the other House. More explicitly, unless doing so betrays me, you can willingly or by force betray the women of the other House. Needless to say, exposing each other as concubines - the one betrayal you can do - is not an option I will tolerate. I can order you not to, and you won't willingly do so. It is the compulsion magic that needs to be stopped. The loyalty bond that binds you to me and your House must also bind you to me and my other House.

"My situation is rare. It's been well over a century I am told since one man was Head of two Houses and even longer since he had more than a couple of women. But the one benefit to having the

brightest witch of her age as my Consort is she can research. I can bind you two to both houses."

"How?" Mallory asked.

"Simple. First, you two will watch me shag Hermione senseless." Hermione responded with a squeal of joy. "That will bind you both to her as your lead Consort - at least if and until I find a Black Consort. It will also bind Mallory to House Potter as by ancient sex rite magic, the House Black Concubine can be bound if her Master shags a House Potter Concubine or Consort of equal or higher status. Likewise, once Hermione is good and shagged and Mallory good and bound, I will shag Mallory senseless to further bind Minnie to me. That will complete the bonding and you two will be bound to me and both of my families, unable to betray any by will or by force."

Harry had been spent and limp until now. He focused deep within, called upon his desires and newly recognized metamorph abilities and within five seconds was as ready as he ever had been, drawing a gasp from the two older witches.

"If you have not already figured it out," he said, "I've recently learned I was a latent Metamorphagus. It seems to be a talent with some rather pleasurable side effects." He then turned to Hermione. "Ready love?"

"Take me, Harry," she all but demanded. Who was Harry to deny her anything? He led her over to the large couch, laid her down right next to Mallory, for whom this act was meant so she would be bound both to Hermione and House Potter. After a few minutes of foreplay, Harry did as she asked and entered her. Just as before, Harry brought her to climax twice and climaxed himself when she called his name in ecstasy the second time. Harry did not notice the flash of magic that happened between him, Mallory and Hermione.

Harry was soon sitting on the couch with Hermione cuddled into his left side. He knew it would be a few minutes before he could complete the bonding process with Mallory and Minerva. Truth was, he was tiring a little and needed the time to recover just a bit. While

he sat there caressing the love of his life, an idea came to him. He asked Minerva to cuddle up to him on his right side. Once she was comfortably in position, and after giving the two witches embraced in his arms a long, slow kiss each, he asked Mallory to straddle him. She did as asked, knelt over his lap and facing him. He now had all three witches pressing into his body at various points and he was able to kiss and suckle Mallory while caressing the others. Needless to say, he found this extremely erotic and that had the desired effect. It was not long before Mallory was able to take him inside of her and begin to ride him slowly.

Mallory's hands were on his shoulders as she steadied herself and slowly rode him up and down. Both Hermione and Minerva had an arm wrapped around either his shoulder or waist and another across his chest and he had a hand on each of their breasts. There were soft sighs of contentment to either side of him and increasing moans of pleasure from the witch on his lap. Harry thought this was brilliant. A little too brilliant, perhaps, as when Mallory told him she was coming, Harry came as well. Harry did notice the flash of bonding magic this time. He did not say anything yet, but Mallory's collar had changed. Where before it had a silver, scripted "B", it now had a silver, scripted "BP".

Even though the bonding was complete, Harry decided that this last act was so much fun - at least for him - he wanted the other two to play too. As soon as Mallory had caught her breath and seemed thoroughly relaxed, he had her change places with Minerva. As Minerva was straddling him, he noted her collar had changed as well. The "P" was now "PB". Again, it did not take Harry long to recover and he was soon deep inside the older witch, watching the pleasure on her face as she slowly worked her magic with him while he caressed and fondled the two younger witches cuddling on either side of him. Again, when the older witch was clearly climaxing, Harry lost himself into her.

One last time for now, he thought. Once Minerva was calmed down, he asked her to change places with Hermione, whose squeal indicated she was more than ready to pleasure her lover. As she settled onto his lap so that she could kiss him and allow him access to her breasts, Harry again noted her collar had changed. Again, the

silver “P” was now “PB” just like Minerva’s. With the caresses of three women, it did not take Harry long to recover and soon he was inside Hermione. She was seemingly wild with desire and he watched her as her face contorted as each pleasurable sensation washed over her. It was not long before she was moaning his name and begging him to finish with her, which again he was more than happy to do.

As a very sated Hermione joined the other two witches in a three witch Harry cuddle, Harry allowed his concubines to speak freely. “Furthermore, that is the rule for you two and not the exception.”

“Yes Milord,” they replied.

“And please? When we are being intimate like this, can you call me Harry at least from time to time?”

“Yes Harry,” they replied.

“Harry?” Minerva asked.

Harry turned to his right and looked into Minerva’s eyes as she gave him a light kiss on the lips.

“If this were a class on a different kind of wand use,” she giggled, “you would definitely be getting top marks from me.”

Harry blushed. “Thanks,” he said softly.

“Our Harry sure knows how to wield it,” Mallory agreed. “You have any idea how lucky a witch you are, Hermione?”

“Yep!” Hermione agreed.

“What surprised me,” Minerva said, “is how unabashed Hermione is. I would have never guessed she would make love before an audience.”

Hermione giggled a little.

“It’s always the smart, quiet ones,” Mallory added.

Harry chuckled. “When we first made love, she told me some of her fantasies. She is definitely more - er - imaginative than I was. It seems she really gets turned on when other women watch her and she gets turned on watching as well.”

“I do,” Hermione admitted. “Even more knowing just how good Harry is and therefore knowing just how wonderful he’s making you feel. Honestly, though? Watching Harry with Minerva got me so wet and hot that had I not been next, I would have rubbed one off right there!”

“Really?” the three asked.

“Minerva is my favorite teacher,” Hermione admitted. “The whole time I was wondering who was teaching who and whether she was enjoying it as much as I did.”

“Harry certainly can make this witch’s toes curl,” Minerva chuckled. “It’s been a long time for me, but I’m certain that maybe only his Great-granddad was better for me and that may have been because I was more his wife and lover than his concubine. Harry can have his way with me anytime.”

“Me too,” Mallory sighed.

“Good,” Hermione said brightly, “that makes it unanimous and it’s a good thing too.”

“Why?” the other two witches asked.

“Since this bonding session began, Harry’s made love six times and is going to be sucked off three times...”

“Three times?” Harry asked.

“If you think I’m not going to suck your wonderful cock before this is over, Mister, your sorely mistaken,” Hermione giggled. “Anyway,



before you two arrived he shagged Dora and me senseless. Then there was this morning when the three of us woke up. Let's put it this way," she continued as she slid off Harry's lap revealing his renewed erection, "he's more than any one witch can handle and he'll still be able to give me and whomever shares our bed tonight a parting shag before we go to sleep."

As the older two gapped in amazement at this statement, Harry watched as Hermione took him into her mouth.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER 6/23/96.

Nymphadora (Dora) Tonks, age 21 (7/12/74); Title of Interest to Sirius Black 3/18/74; Concubine By Proxy (Remus Lupon) to Sirius Black 6/20/87; Bound to Sirius Black, 7/22/93; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF BLACK 6/24/96.

Professor Minerva Grace McGonagall, age 68 (2/17/28); Sold at Auction 7/15/43 to Charlus Potter, bound 7/19/43; Bound to Charles Potter 12/20/78; CONCUBINE HOUSE OF POTTER 6/25/96.

Doctor/Healer (Dr./Hr.) Mallory Michelle Grant, age 39 (1/23/57); Sold at Auction, 7/15/72 to Chance Virola, bound 7/17/72; Sold as gift to Sirius Black 3/18/74; CONCUBINE HOUSE OF BLACK 6/25/96.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN: FROM FOUR TO SIX

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 1996. Potter Manor

For the second day in a row, Harry awoke with two witches cuddled against him. Hermione was, of course, one of them. She had asked that one of the others join them and it was agreed that McGonagall would sleep with the couple that night. Mallory had gone home in part to pack up so she could move into the Manor by supper, but also because Harry told her about the binding of his magic. She would be stopping by St. Mungo's for the healing supplies she would need to unbind him. She had told him the process would take two weeks during which time he would not be able to use magic except under supervision because the effects of the unbinding were not predictable.

Oddly, Harry did not seem to mind. There was another wand he was enjoying practicing with and now had four witches with whom he could practice. As he thought that, he felt a hand on his member and looked down and saw that it was Minerva's. He looked over at her, whose face was close enough to kiss and saw her wink. He then looked over at Hermione who was also awake and smiling at him.

"You know fucking her turns me on," she whispered to him. Who was Harry to deny her anything, so he did as he was asked and had sex with his former Transfiguration teacher, or rather he let her have sex with him as she was on top. Hermione never moved, resting her head on his chest and getting a close view of Minerva pleasuring him. One again, Harry held back until Minerva's second orgasm before he filled her with his seed. After a long cuddle that seemed to include Hermione as well, she gave Harry a long kiss before she rose from the bed to begin her day. For Minerva, that meant several hours of paperwork at Hogwarts and then moving her things from her flat to the Manor.

When Minerva came out of the bathroom, still naked, Hermione was riding Harry. Hermione was still riding Harry when Minerva finished dressing and the couple came together just as she was getting ready to leave the room.

“Remus will be here at ten,” she told the couple. “It’s a little before nine right now.”

“Plenty of time for a shower and breakfast,” Hermione said in a husky voice. Harry interpreted it perfectly. What she really meant was plenty of time for sex in the shower and breakfast.

When Remus had arrived that morning Harry had been elated at first. Now, hours later, he sat in the conference room off his First Floor Study with Remus going through yet another ledger book Remus had retrieved from Gringotts. It was yet another boring inventory that reinforced only a few things. First, Harry knew it would be best to leave the managing of his financial affairs to the Goblins. They were the experts and he had no clue what most of this stuff really said. Second, Harry knew that the Potter Estate made him filthy rich and the addition of the Black Estate even richer. Even at the artificially depressed exchange rate at Gringotts, his accounts and investments alone were several billion pounds. His annual income was well over one hundred million and all he had to do to earn that was be alive.

He learned he was probably the largest landholder in all Magical Britain, if not Europe and was intrigued to see the number of Manors he owned and rented out to others. He was even more surprised to see who several of his tenants were. There were properties throughout the British Isles and Europe, not to mention some in the Bahamas and Caribbean. His Potter landholdings, excluding the Manor itself and the adjacent quarter million or so acres were all well managed and profitable.

Many of the Black properties, on the other hand, were not. There were thirty-four Manors or large homes that had not earned a knut in rent since the middle of the 1970’s. All of the properties were occupied and Harry recognized most of the names as those of known Death Eaters or their families. One in particular caught his eye: Lucius Malfoy. According to the account Ledger, he had never paid rent but he and his wife had lived there since 1978, just after they married. The lease indicated he was to pay 4,000 Galleons a month or 480,000 per year. With accrued interest and penalties, Lucius owed him well over nine million. While the Gringotts Goblins generally

did not disclose account information, when an unpaid debt of this magnitude was at stake, they informed the creditor, here Harry, whether the deadbeat could pay. If Gringotts liquidated all Malfoy property and holdings, they would still be in debt to Harry. The same was true of most of his deadbeat tenants.

Harry had a long discussion with Remus about this interesting situation. Harry had accepted the fact that, for the time being, he would remain on the main Potter estate, protected from the war that would soon consume Wizarding Britain until such time as he was ready to fight against both factions. But this bit of news gave him an idea. Remus listened and knew Harry was on to something. He watched intently as Harry wrote a letter to his Black Properties Account Manager and the Director of Gringotts regarding certain properties in his portfolio. While he might not engage that enemy in direct combat, with a single stroke of his quill, he had just crippled the Death Eaters. Letters would go out July 11th, the day after the reading of the Black Will, calling all rents due. The deadbeats accounts would be frozen except for payment of the debt. If, after 30 days, the debts were not satisfied, the deadbeats would be cast onto the street, their wives and daughters seized for sale on the slave market. It was cruel, but it was the law and it would cripple one side of this war allowing Harry to shift focus to the other. To his surprise, Remus thought it brilliant.

A knock on the door to the Conference Room broke up the financial discussion much to Harry's relief. The door opened and Hermione and Tonks walked in and the two women sat in chairs across from Harry. He raised an eyebrow. "Okay, what did I do?" he asked.

"Nothing that I'm aware of," Hermione said. "Why? Feeling guilty?"

"No," Harry chuckled. "You two just look so serious is all. How was your visit with your parents, Dora?"

"It was interesting, Milord," she replied. Harry raised an eyebrow.

“While I was there, we were visited by Mr. and Mrs. Greengrass. The Greengrass family has been aligned with House Black for centuries. Even though my mother was disowned, she is still friends with them. She and Violet were friends back in school.”

“I take it this was not a social call?”

“No Milord. Alliances are two way streets and David Greengrass needs to speak with Milord Black.”

“Me? Why?”

“He would not give much in the way of details, Milord. Death Eaters are leaning on him and have threatened his family. Unless he gave into their demands, they will kill his wife and daughters. He has five girls, Milord.”

“What’s the demand? He’s to take the Dark Mark? Murder innocent people for sport?”

“No Milord. All he’s required to do is sell some valuable property to you and give the proceeds to the Death Eaters and they’ll leave him alone, for now. He took an oath on his magic to keep them from just stealing what they wanted.”

“Wait, if they were going to steal the property rather than have it sold to me ... I’m guessing they think Lord Black is either a Death Eater or a sympathizer.”

“Yes Milord.”

“Who do they think it is?”

“Draco Malfoy. It seems that the young Malfoy has been telling everyone who will listen he’s soon going to be a Lord ever since the papers announced the date of the reading of Sirius’s Will.”

“Someone should have told the git not to count his chickens before they’re hatched,” Hermione observed.

“Two things are certain about the Ferret,” Harry added, “he’s stupid and arrogant. Not a good combination. So, what should I do with this?”

“Greengrass is a Black ally,” Tonks said. “As Head of an Ancient and Noble House, when the Head of an allied House requests a meeting, you are honor bound to hear the man out.”

“That’s it? I don’t have to do what he asks?”

“You just have to hear him out, Milord. You are expected to do more than just patronize him. If you refuse his request, you should give him a reasonable explanation. You don’t want to damage your political and financial alliances without good cause.”

Harry nodded. “When and where?”

“I would recommend a Muggle place,” Tonks replied. “Somewhere open and I would also recommend soon.”

“Tomorrow afternoon,” Harry replied. “One O’clock. Hyde Park in London across from Kensington Palace.”

“I will let him know, Milord,” Tonks said bowing and then leaving the room.

THURSDAY JUNE 27, 1996, Potter Manor

Harry once again awoke with two naked witches in his arms. There was Hermione, of course, snuggled into his left side. She told him she loved going to sleep listening to his heartbeat. To his right was Mallory. He had taken his first dose of the potion she had brought him to unbind his magic the night before. He lay there, holding his girls close and not wishing to wake them yet. Hermione was still apt to sleep in, a side effect from her treatments following the near fatal

curse and Mallory had suggested not to wake her early unless it was necessary. In a few weeks, she should return to normal.

While much of yesterday had been spent with Remus going over both the Potter and Black accounts, and even then it was little more than an overview, it was not as if he had not had a lot of sex. And even though Hermione had spent the day in the Library researching something and supervising the transfer of the Black Library from Grimmauld Place, it was not as if she had been left out. Harry had sex with Minerva and Hermione twice before breakfast. Hermione and he had oral sex after lunch. Then he had sex with Hermione and Dora after dinner. And of course, Mallory had slept with them and thus far that meant sex at least twice with both witches before bed.

Today, he had this mysterious meeting with Mr. Greengrass to think about. Dora had set it up after their after dinner “dessert.” They would be meeting him in Hyde Park this afternoon. He figured with today’s potential schedule, copious amounts of sex might not be in the cards. Still, he had two witches with him now. He was planning on having Minerva and Hermione for dessert this evening and, of course, Dora would be sleeping with them tonight.

Part of him knew he might as well enjoy this while he could. It was a lot to take in and, to be honest, waking up like this was very nice. There was the added bonus that he had not had a nightmare since the night before he and Hermione first made love. But, he also knew what was surely coming. Mallory had wanted children and from Hermione’s research Harry knew she would probably have her wish within the year. Hermione’s research also showed there was a high possibility that Minerva would have a child as well, again within the year. And Harry knew Hermione was taking no precautions. Her bond prevented it. She too would probably be a Mum within the next year. At least he sort of kept his promise to her Dad. Legally, they were married and the child would only be early if it truly was early.

Harry had wanted a real family for as long as he could remember. But he was not sure about being a Dad at sixteen. True, it seemed money was not an issue. Still, it worried him. He had expressed his concerns to Hermione and Minerva the other night and to Hermione and

Mallory just last night. All three women assured him he would make a wonderful father. Still, he hoped they were right.

Harry heard a contented sigh from his right and could feel Mallory stretching her arms. He turned his head towards her and looked into her newly opened blue eyes. He could see her smile just before she leaned in for a brief kiss. Yes, he thought, I can definitely get used to this.

“Morning,” he said smiling back at the witch. “Sleep well?”

“Wonderful,” she whispered back so as not to disturb Hermione. “Good morning, my Prince.”

“Prince?”

“In a way, you rescued me.” Mallory then buried her head into Harry’s chest. He soon could feel her tears and felt her shudder against him. Sirius, he remembered. She was in love with him and...

He held her tight and whispered: “I miss him too.”

“Thank you,” she said.

“I haven’t done anything,” Harry whispered.

“Y-you t-took me in,” Mallory said. “You didn’t have to. Y-you could have...”

“Mallory? I could not and would not sell you. That’s just cruel. My first thought was to free you, but Hermione read about that and that’s even worse. Then I met you and - well - I like you, so there’s nothing to thank me for. If you should thank anyone, it’s Hermione. I never thought she would accept this sort of thing, yet she has. Lesser of two evils, she says.”

“What does that mean?” Mallory sniffed.



“It means she knows me probably better than I know myself. She thinks you’ll be happier here with us than you would be otherwise. And, she knows I have what she calls a ‘saving people’ thing. I cannot sit idly by and let people suffer. She knows I can’t and I guess figures that being with me in this way is better for you and for the others and for the ones I plan to purchase than any other option.”

“Thank you, Harry,” she said again. “Harry?”

“Hmmm?”

“I don’t like my job,” Mallory said.

“You don’t like being a Healer?”

“I like that. But St. Mungo’s... The hours suck. I always wanted my own practice. I was thinking and - well - there’s over twelve hundred families in Pottersport last I heard, or at least there were and they all have to go to London for even basic care. We do have a small hospital, but it’s mainly for injuries and such. I was thinking that, perhaps, I could open my own clinic for them, you know. I’d probably have to do house calls, but still...”

“If that’s what you want, then do it.”

Hermione finally woke up several minutes later as Mallory was mounting Harry’s broomstick to give it a celebratory ride in thanks for her new clinic. After Mallory was finished and lay contented in Harry’s arms, Harry told Hermione about what Mallory wanted to do and how he was going to support it. It was not long before Harry’s basilisk was playing inside yet another chamber.

THURSDAY JUNE 27, 1996. Hyde Park, London, UK

Remus had shown Harry and Hermione how to travel to and from the Estate. He had brought them to London this day for the meeting that Tonks had arranged and shown them how to do it on their own, for later use of course. They were strolling towards the prearranged meeting place with the man. Having several minutes before they were

supposed to meet him, they walked hand in hand enjoying the famous park, the lovely weather and each other's company.

"Still no clue about what this is about Harry?" Hermione asked.

"No," Harry admitted.

"Still want to go through with it?"

Harry nodded. "The Greengrass family has been allied with the Blacks for generations. I spoke with Remus and Tonks about this again this morning when you were doing your research in the Library. It is not prudent to turn one's back on an alliance. I would in a heartbeat if we're talking about a Death Eater family. But the Greengrass family remained neutral during the last war and is neutral as we speak."

"Tonks said they needed to sell some valuable property quickly," Hermione remembered.

"Remus believes that the Death Eaters are leaning on them," Harry nodded. "Basically, they can either pay the Death Eaters money, join up or die. Tonks says that the Greengrass family is not about to join up, but that they are not wealthy either."

"Why won't they join?"

"Although they are Purebloods, they do not support that agenda and never have. While they can hardly be considered a 'light' family, they most certainly are not Dark and have a reputation of hating the Dark Arts."

"Daphne is one of the few Slytherins who never picked on me or anyone else for that matter."

"She also did not join Umbridge."

"So what's your plan?"

“For now, I’m going to hear him out.”

After another long kiss, the two lovers continued on the path towards the meeting. They soon saw their quarry, or rather they saw the young woman with spiky bubble gum pink hair standing next to a balding man and an older woman. Tonks had found their target and they slowly walked towards the possible threat. Tonks and the man and woman had their backs to Harry and Hermione. They walked around the bench and managed to catch Tonks’ attention.

“Mr. and Mrs. Greengrass, I presume,” Harry said formally.

The couple had been staring at the ground. They looked up and saw another couple standing before them. The young man had raven hair and piercing green eyes. He was dressed in what were obviously tailored trousers and a nice polo shirt. The young woman was at least three inches shorter than the man. She had long, curly brown hair and brown eyes and was wearing a very nice and flattering light blue sundress.

“David and Vivian,” Tonks continued, “this is Harry Potter and his Consort, Lady Hermione.”

David Greengrass looked a little upset at this news. “I asked for a meeting with the next Lord Black,” he almost growled.

“I am Lord Black,” Harry said. He extended his left hand so that David could see the Black Family Ring.

David Greengrass nodded and seemed to pale a little. “My apologies, Milord.”

“I am under the impression you were expecting someone else?”

“Indeed. I - er - well, everyone seems to think that Draco Malfoy is the next...”

“No doubt everyone includes the arrogant little bastard himself?”

“He made that point very clear to me only a few days ago, Milord. Of course, he was not wearing that ring.”

“And he never will,” Harry smirked.

“I - well, forgive me, but how?”

“Sirius Orion Black was the last Lord Black. He died without an heir and named me as his successor in his will.”

“So you two are related?”

Harry nodded. “Second cousins or some such I am told. We are both descended from Phineus Nigellus.”

“This is - er - good news, Milord. I am curious as to why it has not been made public yet?”

“There are reasons, Sir. The error will be corrected at the formal Will reading. I can assure you, though, I am Lord Black. That fact is both incontrovertible and unassailable.”

“You have no idea how relieved I am to learn of your investiture, Milord.”

“Dora told me that you have a matter you wish to discuss?”

“I don’t know how well you are versed in Pureblood politics, Milord.”

“I am arguably getting a crash course in it. But it may be wise to assume I know little or nothing, especially if it is important.”

David Greengrass nodded. “The war is all about Pureblood politics,” he said softly. “Everyone knows that You-Know-Who and his followers want Purebloods to control the world.”

“Which would be funny,” Harry interrupted, “when you consider that Voldemort...” the couple gasped at the name “is a Half-blood.”

“What?”

“Voldemort’s real name is Tom Riddle. His mother was a Pureblood. His father was a Muggle.”

“So this whole war is a sham,” Greengrass grumbled. “I always thought so, just not for that reason.”

“Explain please.”

“The ‘light’ side is also lead by a faction of Pureblood supremacists. While it’s not well known, Dumbledore also believes in Pureblood rule and has for decades. The only differences between the two sides are their chosen means to the same end and the degree of direct control they believe they should have over the Muggles.

“The Greengrasses, while Purebloods, never believed in such nonsense and we certainly do not believe we wizards have any claim to rule over the Muggles. We never have, not even in the distant past. The histories our children are taught are fraught with lies. The real truth belies the Pureblood agenda, most notably that without Muggle Borns, the wizarding race will not survive more than a handful of generations.

“Since both sides have little use for Muggle Borns in the end, we have remained neutral. With respect to the ‘light’ side, they leave us alone. But You-Know-Who does not believe in neutrality. We are either Death Eaters, supporters or the enemy. For political reasons, the Death Eaters have allowed a degree of neutrality to exist so as not to drive support to the other side. To remain ‘neutral’, families like mine are required to pay an annual tax to the Death Eaters.

“This tax is not cheap, but for years it was something I could pay. True, I had to make sacrifices. I have five daughters and they are the reason for living, but I have not been able to give them everything I could have by reason of the tax.”

“And you had to pay this tax even when Voldemort was missing?” Hermione asked.

Mr. Greengrass nodded. “Admittedly, it was a lot less than when he was around and his Death Eaters active. As I understand it, the continued tax was used to bribe Ministry officials to look the other way and not aggressively seek to round up the remaining Death Eaters.”

“Far be it for Lucius to use his own family’s wealth on such matters,” Harry said with disgust.

“When He returned last spring, the tax returned to the old levels. I have two daughters in Hogwarts and a third, Rachel, was supposed to start last fall. But the tax made Hogwarts too expensive. Daphne and Astoria continued, but we’ve been home schooling Rachel. Add to it the fact that in all probability she would have been sorted into Slytherin which according to my older girls is overrun with Death Eater spawn and we felt it best not to send her. Still...

“As I said, I could afford the tax, at no small inconvenience to my family. Then, after the fiasco at the Department of Mysteries, things changed.”

“How?” Harry asked.

“Last Sunday, three Death Eaters appeared at my home to collect the annual tax. The tax was five times what it had ever been and far more than I could afford. Maybe they were singling my family out, I don’t know, but the choice was pay or watch my entire family die. The problem was I could not pay. I did not have the money. I think they knew this.”

“How so?”

“They gave me an alternative,” Greengrass replied with tears forming in his eyes. “I must sell my two oldest as concubines to Lord

Black before the will is read! They made me make an Unbreakable Vow on my life and the lives of the rest of my family!"

"And you were certain that Draco Malfoy was to be this Lord Black?"

Greengrass nodded. "One of the Death Eaters said so."

"And your Vow?" Hermione asked. "It was to sell them to Lord Black and not Draco Malfoy?"

"They were clear on that point. The sale was to the next Lord Black."

"Unbreakable Vow?" Harry asked Hermione.

"It's a dark magical vow, Harry," she replied. "If one breaks such a vow, they die. And he has bound his entire family!"

"No Miss," Greengrass said, "just myself, my wife and our three youngest daughters. Daphne and Astoria are not bound by the vow."

"Interesting," Hermione said. "Flawed yet very Slytherin."

"How so?" both Harry and Mr. Greengrass asked.

"Let's assume for the sake of argument that Draco would indeed become the next Lord Black," she said. "If Mr. Greengrass fails to sell his daughters to said Lord Black by the day of the Will reading, he and the others die. The two girls would then be orphans. It takes at least three weeks for a will to be probated, more often more than a month. Until then, the girls are Wards of the Ministry and..."

"Dumbledore would be acting as their magical guardian," Harry caught on. "And as he is selling witches left and right at this year's auction..."

"And as the auction is five days after the Will reading..."

“They would be sold anyway.”

“And Draco would get them one way or another,” Hermione finished. “But...”

“Draco’s not the next Lord Black,” Harry said with a smile forming on his face. “Any way we could - um - trick the vow?”

“No Harry,” Hermione said. “One way or another, the girls will have to be sold as concubines.”

“And you want me to buy them?”

“If there was another way, I would suggest it. There isn’t, Harry. You know this is the right thing to do.”

Harry nodded. “And you’re okay with this?”

“We’ve already had this discussion, Harry.”

“But they’re Slytherins!”

“I can assure you, Milord, my girls are decent people,” Vivian spoke for the first time sounding insulted.

“Harry, Daphne is the one girl in her House in our year who has never been a problem for us. She’s quiet, but seems nice enough. Besides, think about it! Draco wants them. The Death Eaters want Draco to have them. He won’t get them this way. In the big picture it’s a small thing, but any blow to their cause...”

“Fine!”

“You know you’d never forgive yourself if you didn’t do this...”

“I said fine, Hermione. Mr. Greengrass, are there any terms to this sale? Any documents you need to prove you’ve complied?”



“The Death Eaters will not allow me to accept more than 150 Galleons for them,” Mr. Greengrass sighed. “I have the necessary documents with me. There’s the Bill of Sale for your records, the Title to my...” he wept for a moment. Even though he knew this was the best he could do for them and his family, it was too much. When he cleared his head, he continued. “And a receipt,” he said. “Seal the receipt with your House Ring. That should be the proof I need.”

“So that’s 300 Galleons?” Harry asked as he drew a bank book from his pocket.

“No Sir, 150 total.”

“That cheap son of a bitch!” Hermione exclaimed.

“I have a feeling this was more a punishment than a true transaction,” Harry said to her.

Harry sat on the end of the bench and began writing something. Hermione could see he was careful to use non-descript handwriting. He then sealed the piece of paper with the Black ring. He handed it to Mr. Greengrass. “This is a draft for 150 Galleons drawn on the Black Family Vaults,” he said. “That should be further proof that you did sell to Lord Black.”

“Thank you,” Mr. Greengrass said with pain in his voice. He began signing the various documents he had brought with him while Harry was again working on another draft. Mr. Greengrass soon turned over the signed and sealed Bills of Sale and Titles to his two oldest daughters. Harry affixed the Black Seal to each and to each of the receipts.

“That concludes this transaction,” Mr. Greengrass said formally. Harry nodded and handed Mr. Greengrass another draft.

“Fifty,” Mr. Greengrass began, “fifty thousand galleons?”

“Drawn from the Potter Vaults,” Harry said. “It should be untraceable.”

“What’s this for?”

“Get the rest of your family out of this country, Sir. Get them somewhere safe for now. In time, we will locate you and bring you somewhere safe where you can reunite with your daughters, but that may be many months from now at the earliest.”

“You don’t have to do this, Milord,” Greengrass protested.

“You care about your family. I can keep your daughters safe, but it would be easier for me and for them to know the rest of you are safe as well.”

“Th-thank you, Milord! House Greengrass will always remain allied to House Black.”

“Is there anything else you want to discuss?” Harry asked. “For the time being, you are still their father and guardian.” Harry made it clear that he wanted to know what Mr. Greengrass wished for his daughters under the circumstances.

“If it’s not too much trouble,” he replied, “I’d prefer that they no longer attend Hogwarts.”

“Done!”

“And they be allowed to bring all their things with them?”

“Done!”

“And you won’t whore them out?”

“Wouldn’t think of it.”

“I think it best if you explain to them why this has happened. I’m not sure I can.”

“I’ll explain, Sir.”

Mr. Greengrass nodded sadly. “When would you like to take possession of the merchandise?”

“What’s convenient for you?”

“You can take them now, if you like.”

Harry shook his head. “Got too many irons in the fire today.”

“Tomorrow morning? I’d prefer to do this sooner rather than later.”

“Dora will be by tomorrow then. I’m really sorry this is necessary.”

Mr. Greengrass shrugged as if to say it could not be helped. “Thank you, Lord Black. I am certain this is a better situation for them than otherwise. Take care of my girls.”

“I shall,” Harry promised.

The Greengrasses stood up and Harry did as well as he folded the documents he had received and placed them carefully in his pocket. Mr. Greengrass shook his hand and nodded curtly before he and his wife turned and walked away. Harry could see they were both crying as they left. The whole situation sickened Harry.

“That’s just horrible what happened to them,” Hermione commented quietly. All Harry could do in reply was nod.

After a long pause, he turned to her and said: “Let’s go home.”

FRIDAY JUNE 28, 1996 - The Greengrass home, London, U.K.

It had been a whirlwind of activity at the Greengrass home when the elder Greengrasses returned from their meeting with Lord Black. The meeting was not discussed with the girls. As soon as their parents returned it was announced that the family was moving to Europe the next day. With the help of their two House Elves, the entire house

was packed into several trunks. The furniture and most possessions had been shrunk down. Each of the girls had at least one trunk and, in the two eldest cases, two trunks with all of their clothes, furniture and possessions aside from one suitcase that contained a few changes of clothes and their toiletries.

They had slept in sleeping bags on the floor of what had been their living room that night. They awoke to an empty house and one by one got showered, washed and dressed in their travel attire. Their Elves were removing all but the personal trunks to wherever it was they were going. The elder Greengrasses were not saying, but looked clearly worried and for the first time in memory frightened. Breakfast was a simple meal, the last to be prepared in the only home the five girls had known. It was quiet as each was lost in their own thoughts.

Daphne knew what had caused this. She had seen the Death Eaters come to their home less than a week ago, but she had not overheard the conversation. Clearly, her family was in danger and was fleeing for their lives. She looked at her younger sister Astoria as she ate and knew "Story" had figured that much out on her own.

By the time the family had finished their breakfast, the elves had removed all but the personal trunks and luggage from the house. Daphne noticed then that her father was placing some papers in an envelope. She watched as he called and a strange owl responded. It was not the family owl and not a private one. A band on its leg proclaimed it was a rented Post Owl. Whatever Daddy was up to, he did not want anyone to know where they were going. Daphne knew this could only mean they were really in danger.

Once her father had sent the owl on its way to wherever, he led the family back to the living room. All that remained of their household possessions were the trunks belonging to Daphne and Astoria. Daphne found this odd, but decided it best not to ask any questions as he watched her father fashion two portkeys. Her Mum would obviously use one to take her three younger sisters to wherever they were going. Her father always took the two oldest. As soon as the portkeys were made, he handed one to his wife and she and the three youngest took a hold. She looked at Daphne with a very sad

face as she activated the portkey and she and Rachel, Gretchen and Patrice vanished from sight.

The expression on her mother's face worried Daphne. Something was going on and it was not simply that her family was running for its lives. Something that involved her and her sister Astoria? She was expecting her father to join them. He turned to them and Daphne was stunned to see he was crying. She had never seen him cry.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I do love you both." With that, he activated his portkey and vanished, leaving his two oldest daughters behind and blinking in shock. They had been abandoned!

Where her father stood, there was now a single piece of paper or parchment on the floor. Daphne walked over, still confused and picked it up. The side facing her was blank so she turned it over. She could tell it was a magical copy of some kind of official document based upon the less than crisp print. With increasing dread she began to read.

## BILL OF SALE

June 27, 1996

Seller: David Adrian Greengrass

Buyer: Lord Black, Head of the Ancient and Most Noble House of Black

## ATTEST:

I, David Adrian Greengrass, upon my magic do hereby attest that I am the father and legal and magical guardian of:

Daphne Rene Greengrass, born November 10, 1979, aged 16

Astoria Lynn Greengrass, born October 3, 1981, aged 14

I further attest that said merchandise is of bonding age. I hereby consent to their sale as concubines to Lord Black and that for 150G and other valuable consideration, said sale has been consummated.

She saw her father's signature on the page with the Greengrass seal as well as another seal she recognized as that of the House of Black.

"No," she said in a small voice as she began to cry.

"What is it, Sissy?" Astoria asked.

"D-daddy sold us!"

"What?" Astoria took the page from her sister and read.

"We're to be Draco's whores!" My life is over, Daphne thought as she said that.

"No," Astoria whimpered. "Why?"

"D-death Eaters," Daphne said. "They were here a few nights ago."

"Still," Astoria cried, "I thought Daddy loved us!"

The two teens collapsed into each others arms and cried. For each of them, being bound to Draco Malfoy was a fate worse than death. But they both knew there was nothing they could do about it. The only solace Daphne could think of was that the rest of her family and her sisters were safe, hopefully. The two girls never noticed the elves removing their trunks and luggage from the living room.

"What if it's not Malfoy?" Astoria asked.

"Wh-what?" Daphne replied.

"What if Malfoy is not Lord Black?"

“Th-then it’s probably some old pervert!” Daphne replied, fighting back her tears. “Mum told me most young c-concubines be-become playthings for dirty, old men!” Daphne was certain any hope of a happy life was gone.

“If it could be anyone,” Astoria said still trying to hope, “anyone in the world? I mean if we have to be concubines, who would you prefer as our Master?”

Daphne thought about that. It would only be a dream as she was sure that slime Malfoy was Lord Black. It sickened her to think of that. Draco had been saying he was going to ‘Tame the Shrews,’ meaning her and her sister. He made it clear that if they did not willingly spread their legs for him, like many girls in Slytherin had, he would take them anyway. It was not so much a threat. Draco had raped a few of her housemates. Were it not for her and her sister’s study habits and course loads, which had kept them in the library more often than not and Draco’s own schemes against Muggle Borns in general and Gryffindors in particular, he might have succeeded by now.

It was also slightly fortunate that Draco was betrothed. He was engaged to Pansy Parkinson another girl in Daphne’s year in Slytherin House and had been since he was young. He took her virginity in the House Common Room their Second Year. He wasn’t even discreet about it. She had seen him shagging or getting sucked off by his betrothed more times than she cared to think. She also knew he had no problems sharing his girls. Pansy was frequently seen shagging Draco’s two goon friends Gregory Goyle and Vincent Crabbe, who probably would never have been with a girl had Draco not ordered her to do them. Daphne knew that as Draco’s concubines, she and her sister would be servicing the entire Death Eater Corps and it sickened her.

She thought about her sister’s question. If she had to be a concubine and if she could choose with whom she would be bonded, who would it be? She knew it would not be any boy in Slytherin. They were either Death Eater spawn or future Death Eaters in the making and she hated them for that. There was a boy at school whom she knew she would have doffed her “Ice Princess” persona for had he been

interested in her. It was not going to happen as she knew he hated Slytherins on principal. Still, if he had shown and interest, Daphne would have given him anything and everything. She barely knew him, but did know that she would be his if he wanted her. If the best she could hope for from him was to be his concubine, she would do that eagerly.

She told her sister and to her surprise, her sister agreed emphatically.

“Not like it’s going to happen,” Daphne said feeling the tears returning.

Astoria only nodded. They both knew they were screwed. And they knew they would be. It was not a pleasant thought for either of them and once again they hugged each other and cried for the lives they had lost. They never noticed the pink haired witch who appeared in their living room. Moments later, they were somewhere else entirely. They never felt the transition, but each noticed the change in light. It was a little darker now.

Daphne was the first to open her eyes and realize they were no longer in the Greengrass home.

“Sissy,” she said, her voice filled with dread.

Astoria opened her eyes and saw they were somewhere else. “What happened?” she asked her older sister.

“No idea.”

“Where are we?”

“L-lord Black’s, I imagine but ...”

“But what?”

“This isn’t Malfoy Manor,” Daphne said. “Not at all.”

“You sure?”



“I was there last summer, Sissy,” Daphne said. “Mum and Dad were invited and I went with them. This isn’t it.”

“What’s that mean?”

“No idea.”

“So Draco is not Lord Black?”

“Again, no idea. Maybe they bought a new place.”

“Who - whoever it is, they are not poor.”

“Still...” Daphne began.

Daphne soon realized they were not alone. There was another woman present. She had brown, shoulder length hair and a kind expression on her face.

“Who are you?” Daphne asked with hostility.

“I am Dora,” the woman responded. “Now, if you two will follow me, Lord Black wishes to meet your acquaintance.”

Daphne flashed red. Her hand dove into her robes, grasped her wand and she was drawing it to hex the woman before her. The woman merely flicked her wrist and Daphne’s wand flew from her hand to the woman. Daphne saw that Astoria’s wand had been captured as well.

“Who the hell are you?” Daphne asked.

“A fully trained Auror,” the witch replied.

“Well, if you think I will spread my legs for Draco Malfoy, I’d rather die so kill me now!”

“Me too!” Astoria added.

“If you two think you’re ever going to shag that useless git, sorry to disappoint you,” the witch responded.

“Draco’s not Lord Black?” Daphne asked.

“No. Nor will he ever be.”

“Then who is?”

“Follow me,” the witch said. “You’ll find out very soon.”

“Probably some old perv,” Daphne mumbled.

“Actually, he is about your age,” the witch replied, “and quite dishy. And he can really throw a leg.”

“What do you mean?” Astoria asked.

“You’ll find out soon enough,” the witch replied with a grin.

Daphne and Astoria rose and followed the witch, not sure as to what was going on at all.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, age 15 (born 7/31/80)

Lady Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (9/19/79). Girlfriend/fiancé as of 6/18/96; CONSORT, HOUSE OF POTTER 6/23/96.

Nymphadora (Dora) Tonks, age 21 (7/12/74); Title of Interest to Sirius Black 3/18/74; Concubine By Proxy (Remus Lupon) to Sirius Black

6/20/87; Bound to Sirius Black, 7/22/93; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF BLACK 6/24/96.

Professor Minerva Grace McGonagall, age 68 (2/17/28); Sold at Auction 7/15/43 to Charlus Potter, bound 7/19/43; Bound to Charles Potter 12/20/78; CONCUBINE HOUSE OF POTTER 6/25/96.

Doctor/Healer (Dr./Hr.) Mallory Michelle Grant, age 39 (1/23/57); Sold at Auction, 7/15/72 to Chance Virola, bound 7/17/72; Sold as gift to Sirius Black 3/18/74; CONCUBINE HOUSE OF BLACK 6/25/96.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN: DAPHNE AND ASTORIA

FRIDAY JUNE 28, 1996 - Potter Manor

Daphne and Astoria followed the witch into a large sitting room of some kind, one bathed in sunlight. They were both led to a couch where they were told to sit and await their new Lord Black. They did as they were asked and as soon as the older witch left, they clung to each other and cried silently. This was not what either of them had wanted in life.

Daphne was doing her best at being the big sister, but it was impossible. She and her younger sister were to become little more than whores as she understood it. Most concubines were little more than that and what really hurt her was not that she was one, but that her little sister would be one too. She wanted to save her Sis from this fate, but she had no idea how. It was the not knowing that was driving her spare.

The two young witches clung to each other weeping for their soon to be lost innocence. Even if it was not that git Malfoy, Daphne thought as she tried in vain to comfort her sister, it would still be terrible. She and her sister were still virgins in every sense of the word. She knew, as her sister did, that would end today and not as either had hoped. She would spread her legs for some man today, and not a man she loved and would have done that for willingly. The same would be true for her sister. The best that she could hope for was that their buyer could not bond with both on the same day. She still hoped he would be nice to them, but Daphne believed that was a fool's hope.

There was a faked cough that caught Daphne's attention. Two young people were standing before her and her sister. She recognized them immediately but was even more confused than she already was because they should not be here at all.

"Potter?" she asked, "Granger?"

The two nodded. They recognized something in Daphne's voice neither had expected. Slytherins had always referred to them by last names only, but always with derision. This time, while Daphne had

referred to them by last name, there was something different in her voice. Confusion? Hope? They could not tell.

In Daphne's mind this was too good to be true. Sure, she still was about to become a concubine, but she had quietly observed the young man before her for five years. He might be titled and rich, but he did not carry himself with the arrogance common to the boys she knew in Slytherin or even some of the other Purebloods from other houses. He had always seemed to her to be kind and caring if a little shy. Of course, that attitude did not extend to all. She knew all too well that with regards to Malfoy, Potter was inclined to hex first and ask questions later. But Malfoy had brought such animosity on himself. Daphne's impression of Harry was that he usually gave people a chance. Would that extend to her and her sister? Was he really Lord Black?

Hermione had taken a seat across from the two girls while Harry remained standing. Hermione was wearing jeans and a light blue blouse, while Harry was in slacks and a polo shirt. Harry looked at the two Greengrass girls with a kind yet concerned expression as he could tell they were very scared.

"Good morning," he said as calmly as he could. "I am Harry James Potter, Lord and Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter by right and under the terms of the will of my predecessor in title, the late Lord Charles David Potter and I am Lord and Head of the Ancient and Noble house of Black..."

The two girls gasped in surprise.

"...by law and under the will of my predecessor in title, the late Lord Sirius Orion Black, my godfather."

Daphne could not believe her ears. Was it true? She hoped it was. She noticed the rings on Harry's forefingers and recognized them as House Rings. He had two! An odd sense of relief washed over her and she could not restrain herself. She stood and rushed into Harry's surprised arms and was immediately joined by her sister. She buried her face into his chest as tears of relief flowed freely.

“Thank Merlin!” she said softly. “W-we thought...” She could not finish the statement.

Harry held the two girls for what seemed like several minutes not saying anything. He waited until both of them calmed down before he released his hold. Looking from one to the other, he said: “Let me guess, you thought it would be Draco Malfoy?”

Both Daphne and Astoria nodded.

“Please, have a seat and I’ll explain,” he said. This was not exactly what Daphne had expected. She expected him to begin the bonding right away. “You do know why you are here, don’t you?”

“Daddy sold us to you,” Astoria said in a small voice. “Why would he do that? Didn’t he love us?” she added to no one in particular.

“He does,” Harry said softly. “This was not something he wanted for either of you.”

“So why did you make him?” Daphne shot out.

“I did not. This was as much as a surprise to me as it is for you two.”

“What do you mean? How could you not know?”

“I can assure you that before I met your father yesterday, I had no idea about this. May I explain?”

Daphne nodded.

Harry then explained the nature of the war and the two Pureblood factions vying for control. He explained that their father did not wish to support either side and that while Dumbledore’s faction left him alone, the Death Eaters would not. To remain “neutral” he had to pay protection money, for that’s what it really was. He and others like him were victims of extortion, forced to pay or watch their families die.

This had been going on since before Daphne was born and even when everyone thought Voldemort was gone forever.

Harry then explained what he saw as a recent plot between Death Eaters and the Malfoy family, particularly Draco Malfoy.

“Somehow, that idiot has it in his head that he’s the next Lord Black,” Harry said.

“How did you become...” Daphne began. “I mean you said something about a Will, but don’t you have to be a blood relation?”

Harry nodded. “Sirius Black was my second cousin.”

“So he could designate you as Head of House assuming he had no son of his own,” Daphne realized aloud.

Harry nodded. “Draco is closer in kinship and had there not been a Will he would have become Head of House based upon that kinship. But Sirius was not about to let the House fall into the hands of a Death Eater family. And, although the Will has not been read, as his final act as my guardian he emancipated me allowing me to come into my inheritances as soon as the Goblins at Gringotts verified both the authenticity of the Will and determined that the Will would survive any challenge.”

“Then why does everyone think it’s Malfoy?”

“Because he’s an arrogant ass and assumes that he as the closest male relation and a Pureblood is destined to become the next Lord Black,” Harry said. “I’ll never accuse him of having a brain.”

“The fact that there is a new Lord Black is only known by a few. Outside of Gringotts and my Houses, there are only four or five others who know the truth, none of them are likely to tell Draco or anyone else for that matter.

“Anyway, the Death Eaters approached your father last Sunday demanding this year’s payment. It was far more than he ever had to

pay before and also more than he could afford. As I understood it, he probably could not have paid it even if he had wanted to. That's where you two come in. The Death Eaters made him make an Unbreakable Vow on his life and the lives of your mother and younger sisters that he would sell the two of you to the next Lord Black by the time the Black Will was made public."

"Not Malfoy?"

"Not Malfoy."

"That seems pretty stupid. He must have suspected there was a chance he might be passed over."

"You probably know him better than I do. What do you think?"

"He's arrogant enough to think that he must be the next Lord Black."

Harry nodded.

"Why didn't they just make it Malfoy?" Astoria asked.

"That same question crossed my mind when I returned from my meeting with your parents yesterday," Harry said. "Hermione here looked up the law regarding such things. As Draco Malfoy, he is still underage and under the Guardianship of his father, even if the git is in Azkaban. As such, he cannot consent to any kind of contract. But, had he become the designated successor to the Black estate, he would have been emancipated and could legally purchase concubines. Basically, the only way he could buy you was if he was Lord Black."

"He's in for a rude shock," Daphne chuckled.

"More than one," Harry said. "Under the terms of my godfather's Will, he will be disinherited and disowned as a member of the Black clan. I am to offer his mother the right to have her marriage to Lucius Malfoy annulled. Whether she does is up to her but..."



“Most of the Malfoy’s money came from the marriage to Narcissa,” Daphne said. “Malfoy let that slip once. That and the fact that ‘Malfoy Manor’ is a Black property that was part of the dowry.”

“The Manor is still Black property,” Harry said. “The contract between Lucius and House Black was a rental contract. I have recently learned that Lucius never paid so much as a knut in rent.”

“You’re going to impoverish him?” Daphne asked catching on to what Harry was planning.

Harry nodded, “and about thirty other Death Eater families that have not been paying their rents to my estate. But I digress.

“Because of the vow your father was forced to make, he had no choice other than to offer you to Lord Black. I could have refused the offer, which would have triggered the vow and left you orphans. Being one myself, I could not do that. That and the fact of the matter is had he broken the vow and had you been orphaned, in all probability your temporary magical guardian - Albus Dumbledore - would have sold you as concubines anyway.”

“So there was no real avoiding this,” Daphne realized.

“Unfortunately,” Harry nodded. “I can tell you that it broke your parent’s hearts to do this. They only did it to keep what was left of your family safe. I am sure that had there been any other way, your Dad would have done anything to prevent this from happening. But there was not.”

“So we have to become concubines?”

Harry nodded sadly. “If there were any other way, I would take it. Unfortunately, the language in the vow your father took, while it resulted in thwarting Malfoy, requires that the contract be fulfilled. If I don’t bond with you, the contract is not complete and your father will have broken the vow because you failed to become the concubines of Lord Black. Still, I have done what I can and will continue to do what I can to make the best of this situation for all concerned.”

“How so?”

“First off, I gave your parents 50,000 Galleons so they could leave this country and continue to support your sisters.”

“Fifty thousand?” Daphne exclaimed! That was more than the average witch or wizard would earn in ten years. It was several times more than her father earned. “How much were the Death Eaters asking for?”

“Fifteen,” Harry said. “Had he come to me before he made the vow, I would have covered it. At the time, however, he thought Malfoy was Lord Black so there really was no point as it was clear that a Malfoy Lord Black would not honor the alliance and wanted the two of you.”

“If I ever see that git, he’s dead,” Daphne growled.

After a pause, Harry continued. “I made your parents a few promises I intend to keep. First off, I promised them that I would do my best to keep you safe. That means you will live here at the estate for the duration of the War. The wards protecting this estate are even better than those protecting Hogwarts. It is impossible for an enemy to cross into this land unscathed or undetected.”

“So we’re prisoners?”

“Not really. You are under my protection. You will have unrestricted movement within the estate and, if you must know, that’s far more open than you may even be used to. The estate is approximately three hundred and ninety square miles, around a quarter million acres.”

The two girls’ mouths dropped. While the concept of a square mile was not easy for them to grasp, acres were.

“It’s four miles from here to the ‘front’ property line, five miles to either side property line and an average of sixteen to the rear of the property which I’m told is on the coast. There’s even a large town on

the coast entirely within the boundaries of the estate which, I am told, has probably the best shopping outside of Diagon Alley.”

“Bloody hell,” Astoria started.

“You’re told?” Daphne added. “You don’t know? How could you not know? Professor Snape said you were rich and pampered and...”

“Snape has no idea about my life outside of Hogwarts,” Harry snapped, trying but failing to control his temper. “This is my ancestral home! This is Potter Manor! Until last Sunday, I didn’t even know it existed! I most certainly had never been here before! Yes I mean NEVER! I wasn’t even born here!

“When my parents died I was sent to live with my Mum’s sister who’s a Muggle and who hates magic. I was never loved there. I was beaten frequently and sometimes severely just because of who I was! I cooked, cleaned and tended the garden and did any other menial task my relations thought needed doing practically from the moment I could walk. I didn’t even know my real name until I was five! I thought I was called ‘Boy’ or ‘Freak.’

“Until I started Hogwarts, I never had money. I ate nothing but table scraps for years! When I arrived at Hogwarts, Madam Pomfrey had to place me on a series of nutrient and growth potions because I was suffering from prolonged malnutrition! For ten years, I lived in a broom closet under the stairs and the only clothes I wore were worn out hand-me-downs from my fat cousin. Pampered? Rich? House elves are generally better treated than I was!

“If you must know, at the end of First Year Hermione gave me a hug and kissed my cheek. That was the first time I can recall anyone doing that!”

“I-I’m s-sorry,” Daphne whimpered. “I didn’t know.”

Harry looked at Hermione and saw she was crying. “You never told me it was that bad,” she said.

“I’m sorry,” Harry said. “At first I didn’t want to scare you. Then I didn’t want to upset you. Most recently, I was afraid that if you ever learned how horrible it really was you might do something silly.”

“Like what?”

“Like kill them.”

“I wouldn’t blame her if she did,” Astoria said. “I’d rather be a concubine than go through that!”

“Where was I?” Harry asked after a pause while he regained his composure.

“Safety,” Hermione said.

“When the time is right,” Harry continued, “when I think I can safely bring your family back to England, I will. It may even be before the War is over as there is plenty of room here at the estate. Hermione’s parents have also been sent overseas for their safety. Hopefully, in a few months when the enemies have forgotten about them, they can return and live here. I have a fair few empty guest houses where they can live.

“When they return, you will continue to live here at the Manor, but you will be allowed to visit them or they you as your schedule permits.”

“Schedule?” Daphne asked.

“Your father asked me to see to your education but added that he would prefer that you did not return to Hogwarts. My guess is he’s concerned that it’s too open to attack and that Malfoy will be there. For similar reasons, I agree. You will be tutored here at the Manor. That’s already been arranged and you both will sit for your exams. Should you desire to continue your education beyond N.E.W.T. level, we’ll try and arrange that as well.

“Tutors?”

“We have a fair few lined up,” Harry said. “Four are qualified Aurors, one is a Healer, one a Curse Breaker for Gringotts, one has taught Transfiguration for forty years at a magical school, and one is a former Tri-wizard Champion who has recently received a Mastery in Charms. They can cover the entire Hogwarts syllabus except for Care of Magical Creatures, Divination and Muggle Studies, although as Hermione and I are Muggle raised, we can teach that as well.”

“Arithmancy and Ancient Runes?” Astoria asked.

“They will be taught. In fact, I am probably going to take them as well. Should have done so in the first place.”

“That’s not so bad, then,” Astoria said.

“Don’t forget the library,” Hermione said.

“Library?” Daphne asked.

“It’s even better and larger than the one at Hogwarts,” Hermione said proudly.

Daphne found this hard to believe, but would withhold judgment until she had a chance to check it out for herself.

“Your father asked also that you not be whored out,” Harry continued. “As I have no intention of doing that with my existing concubines, I wouldn’t have even considered it in any event.”

“Existing concubines?” Daphne asked.

“Turns out I inherited two from my godfather and one from my grandfather.”

“I take it they are older?”

“Minnie, whom I inherited from the Potter estate, is in her late sixties. Mallory, who is from the Black estate, is thirty-nine, and you met Dora earlier. She’s almost twenty-two.”

“Have you bonded with them?” Daphne asked.

Harry nodded.

After a pause during which both girls gaped at Harry, Daphne asked: “And where does Gr - H-Hermione fit in to this picture?”

“She’s bonded to me as well,” Harry replied.

“Concubine?”

Harry shook his head. “Consort. She is Lady Potter now.”

“How? When? I didn’t even know you were dating?”

“How was by accident,” Harry laughed, “although we probably would have bonded anyway. When was Sunday afternoon. She offered herself to me and I accepted her. Would have under any event. I do love her and have for years but was afraid she didn’t see me that way. Turns out the both of us were thinking that about each other. She almost died in the fight at the Ministry and I decided then, if she survived, I would tell her how I really felt. When she finally woke up, I did.”

“It was wonderful,” Hermione sighed.

“Which part?” Daphne asked. “The finding out he loves you or the sex?”

“Both,” Hermione said with a smile. “Probably the fact that he loves me more. But the sex has been awesome!”

“Were you a virgin?”

Hermione nodded. "As was Harry. The most either of us had ever done before was a good snogging."

"And your first time?"

"Hurt at first. But he was patient and - wow!" Hermione blushed and giggled.

"That good?"

"Amazing! He's ... well, you can ask the others. He knows how to please you. He knew from the very first," she sighed.

"Poor girl can't get enough of me," Harry chuckled.

"First of all," Hermione huffed, "I was walking funny for over a day! Secondly, I'm not the only one. The only reason I get more than the others is because as your Consort I get dibs on you!"

"Walking funny?" Astoria asked.

"Harry's pretty big," Hermione said. "Not too big, but the others say he's as big as they ever had. That might have been enough to make me sore. The fact that we made love over ten times that first day..."

"Ten times?" Daphne said in shock.

"A light day for Harry," Hermione giggled. "He can out shag any of us! Yesterday he only had the time for twelve. But the others? Fourteen and more! And that does not include oral sex or other ways. He's flat out amazing!"

"You suggested you have barely left the Manor since you got here," Daphne said to Harry. He nodded. "I can see why." She sounded a little disappointed in him, but there was a bit of a smirk on her face.

"How amazing?" Astoria asked. There was an eagerness to her voice.

“What do you mean?” Hermione replied.

“Er - orgasms.”

“He’s never failed us in that. Always one. Usually at least two.”

“Really?” the two girls asked almost in awe.

Hermione nodded grinning.

“I confess I’m still a virgin,” Daphne said. “Had I known boy sex could be - er - satisfying...”

“Okay, I’m listening,” Hermione said.

“Most girls in Slytherin give it up by the end of Third Year. A fair few not by choice. I’d say almost half have been raped. The boys, however, they’re not about - er - satisfying us. From what the other girls say, most cases the only way you’ll get off is if you’re gang banged by more than one boy. They all complain the boys are in and out before they even get started.”

“And Draco?” Harry asked.

“The girls that have been with him call him ‘noodle dick’,” Astoria said. “You’re better filled with your finger than with Malfoy. That and if he lasts more than a minute or so it’s a bloody miracle. Not that I would know as I still haven’t done that.”

“And how is it you’ve managed to stay virgins,” Harry asked. Based upon what they said and the fact they were both very attractive, he was surprised they had not been forced into it.

“They don’t call us the ‘Ice Princesses’ for nothing,” Daphne said. “Draco tried more than a few times. I hexed him. The last time he spent a week in the hospital wing. He tried my sister last year and he had blisters on his member for a week.”



“Ouch,” Harry groaned.

“Why so harsh?” Hermione asked.

“You do Draco, you do Crabbe and Goyle too,” Daphne said.

“Yuck three times over,” Hermione replied.

“Understatement. Those goons don’t know what soap is. A troll might be better!”

“Well then,” Hermione replied, “I can assure you both that Harry here will not be in and out - at least not when your pleasure is at issue. He’s pretty quick when we’re dealing with sucking him off though, also a good thing. And he does bathe.”

“Good to know,” Daphne said.

“Which brings us to the more intimate things,” Harry said.

“As in?”

“Living arrangements, sleeping arrangements and the sex thing. Which would you like to discuss first?”

“L-living arrangements.”

“Unless you’re sleeping with me, you will have your own room,” Harry said. “As you are sisters, you can choose either separate rooms or to be roommates.”

“Roommates,” Astoria said. “At home we shared the same room.”

Daphne nodded.

“Done. For now, the two of you will room on the Second Floor, as do all the others. Second and Third Floors are all two bedroom guest

suites. In time, I may renovate them or add a new wing, but that's for later."

"You are?" Hermione asked.

Harry nodded. "This is a family. While we'll take at least one meal a day in the First Floor dining room, when the others have children we'll need more room..."

"Children?" Daphne asked.

"All my concubines will be allowed that privilege, including both of you," Harry replied. "Any woman who has completed her O.W.L.s has that right. Younger ones will have that right in time or at my discretion. But once you had taken your O.W.L. exams, all you have to do is ask."

"And what status will they have?"

"Their last name will be either 'Black' or 'Potter' depending upon which house their mother is specifically bonded to. The heir shall be either the first son of any woman in the house or, in the case of House Potter, the first son born should Hermione have no son. Should I have another Consort, her son will be the Black heir, unless she has none, then it will fall to the son of a Black House concubine. As for the others, they are my children and will be supported and looked after even after my demise. The title will pass to the heir; the property will be divided amongst all of my children."

"How many?"

"That depends upon each of you," Harry replied. "You want only one? That's your call. You want a dozen? Your call again. If enough of you need more room, I will build a new wing to the Manor."

"So if I wanted to have a child now?" Daphne asked.

“You’ve taken your O.W.L.s,” Harry replied, “it’s your call. Of course, you still have to do the pregnant thing. I can’t speed that bit up.”

“And Hermione?” Astoria asked.

Harry shrugged. “Her call. Her Dad gave me his blessing provided that should we marry we do so before she got pregnant.”

“And by becoming his Consort we are married,” Hermione added. “As we are safe here, I am taking no precautions in that regard. I hope to be pregnant soon.”

“And you’re okay with this?” Daphne asked.

Harry nodded. “I’ve always wanted to be a part of a real family, even one as different as this one will be.”

“Harry?” Daphne asked, “once we are bonded, I’d like that opportunity.”

“To be a mother?”

Daphne nodded. “Maybe not right away, but in a few months, sure.”

“Me too,” Astoria said.

“Daphne?” Harry replied, “your wish is my command. Astoria? I’d still prefer to wait until at least your O.W.L. year, okay?”

“That’s fine,” she replied. “I didn’t mean I want to be a Mum today. Just that I want to be one, one day. Thank you, Harry.”

“You’re welcome.”

“You mentioned sleeping arrangements,” Daphne said.

“You two better not be shy about sex,” Harry chuckled.

“What do you mean?”

“It means that since I lost my virginity with Hermione Sunday, I’ve seldom ever had sex without a spectator.”

“What?”

“There has almost always been another witch present when I’ve had sex and, once I bonded with the first of my inherited concubines, I have slept with two women each night.”

“You mean we’ll have to have sex in front of anyone?” Astoria said in shock.

“No,” Harry replied. “Only those women who are or will be bonded to me.”

“And our bonding?”

“Will be in front of the rest of my women.”

Astoria paled.

“It’s not that bad really,” Hermione said as reassuringly as she could. “Harry does his best to make you forget that bit. None of the others mind at all.”

“ Spoken by Miss I-Want-To-Watch-And-Be-Watched,” Harry chuckled.

“What?” the two Greengrass girls asked.

“Hermione likes to watch and be watched,” Harry shrugged. “You will find that unless we expect outside visitors, sex is very public here. Hell! Unless there’s a visitor, my gals seldom wear more than a robe and slippers. Even then, the robe is often open.”

“Only because you won’t leave us alone,” Hermione giggled. “Not that I mind.”

“And as to sleeping arrangements, I don’t sleep alone,” Harry said.

“More importantly,” Hermione added, “since he bonded with Dora - the first of his concubines - he sleeps with two women each night.”

“Sleep with or have sex with?” Daphne asked.

“Yes to both,” Harry smirked.

“At least two times a night each,” Hermione added, “as far as the sex goes.”

“It’s a wonder you get any sleep at all!”

“We usually are asleep by midnight and get a good eight hours,” Hermione replied. “Harry makes a wonderful pillow!”

“Hermione and I discussed this recently,” Harry continued. “Each of my girls will have four nights a year with just me alone if they want. One night will be their birthday and the others roughly every three months after. Other than that, you will rotate with the other concubines. With you two, I have five now. By the end of the summer, I’ll have at least eighteen.”

“EIGHTEEN?” the two girls shrieked.

Hermione then explained the auction, who was up for sale and why, who Harry was planning to purchase and why and the significance of the number. What finally got the two girls smiling was the plan to drive up the price on concubines. Harry planned to start the bidding for his targeted witches at more than ten times the normal price in hopes that sellers would expect that price for their offerings in the future. Harry could afford several thousand Galleons for up to fourteen witches. Few others could afford it for even one. He hoped, as did Hermione, that it would permanently damage the market. The

Greengrass girls thought it was very Slytherin of him. Harry took that comment as the compliment it was meant to be.

“Obviously,” Harry continued, “even I cannot be with twenty women every day. I do have other obligations other than sex. I have been told that as adolescent witches, you both need at least an orgasm a day, preferably more. For now, that is doable for me as there are only the three of you. My other concubines don’t need that from a magical development standpoint. But, when this plan comes together...”

“We’ll still have to pleasure ourselves or something.”

Harry nodded. “Once the bonding is done, you are free to do so whenever and wherever you like. Unless there are guests in the house, of course.”

“You will find,” Hermione continued, “that when there are no guests, we don’t wear much. Just a robe for us women. Harry just wears a robe.”

“While undressing a woman is fun, it becomes a pain if we’re dressing and undressing several times a day,” Harry said with a shrug.

“And you order them to please you?” Daphne said in an accusing voice.

“Aside from the two acts necessary to complete the bond, and only because the orders were part of the bonding, no,” Harry said. “They have sex with me of their own free will.”

“Really,” Daphne replied in disbelief. It was well known that the concubine bond all but eliminated free will, unless... “You give them a choice?”

“Always,” Harry said. “I prefer happy witches to slaves any day.”

“And he makes witches happy,” Hermione giggled.

“So basically, aside from the bonding, we can refuse sex if we want to?”

“In theory,” Harry said.

“And what does that mean?”

“It means that while I’ve never asked or insisted, neither have I ever had a hard on that was not relieved since I bonded for the first time. Hermione would do me, but...”

“There is a limit to how many times I can. Harry easily exceeds it.”

“And the others?”

“He’s very good,” Hermione said. “If anything, they might complain that they can’t get enough Harry time.”

This was a new concept foreign to the girls. In Slytherin, any time was too much for most girls. Then again, the Slytherin boys were not into seeing to the girls’ pleasure. Everything Hermione had said suggested Harry was a polar opposite. Daphne decided to reserve judgment, but deep down she hoped Hermione was not either biased or exaggerating.

“Okay,” Harry continued. “To fulfill the contract and ensure your father cannot break his vow, the two of you will be bonded to me as Lord Black initially.”

“I-initially?” Daphne asked.

“Once I’ve fulfilled the contract, I can do with you as I please. I promised your father I would never sell you so no worries there. But I will transfer one of you to House Potter.”

“Why?”

“How?” Astoria asked.

“It’s mostly administrative. I don’t want the houses - er - unbalanced. It will also allow each of you the chance to give birth to an heir. If you were in the same House, that would not be possible. That’s really the only distinction between one house and another - the last name of the child and what line they inherit from.

“As to how, well it means one of you will go through the bonding rite twice. I’ll let you decide who. If you can’t decide, I’ll probably just flip a coin to keep it fair.”

“And what does this bonding rite entail?” Daphne asked sounding nervous again.

“Two sex acts at a minimum,” Hermione answered. “At the very least, you have to perform oral sex on Harry and have intercourse with him.”

“Perhaps it would be best if you asked us both to do it twice,” Astoria suggested.

“Why?” Harry asked.

“Well,” she blushed, “if we find it - er - difficult the first time, it won’t seem like such a burden to become a Potter witch if the other has to do it again to. And, if you are as good as Hermione says, then the Black witch won’t feel left out. It would be easier for us to decide, I think, if the sex bit was not at issue.”

“Works for me,” Harry said. “The bonding rite will be after lunch. Lunch is in little over an hour. An Elf will show you to your room for now so you can - um - unpack or whatever. You’ll be dining with Hermione, Dora and me on the veranda.

“And with regard to the Elves, they are literally part of my family. I don’t know how you treated House Elves, but these are not House Elves. You will not harm them - ever. Hurt them and you hurt me. You will treat them with courtesy and respect. They are practically like



mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters to all of us. Disrespect them and you disrespect me. Understand?"

It was the only time he had talked down to them. They both knew he was serious on this point and nodded in understanding. There was no point in telling him that that's how their Daddy saw their House Elves at home.

An elf maiden named Tarla led the two Greengrass girls to their rooms. The two girls saw at once they were not dealing with a House Elf. Tarla was almost as tall as Astoria, which meant taller than any House Elf they had ever seen. She was dressed in a nice blue dress that matched her eyes. Unlike House Elves, she had hair on her head, in her case blonde and curly. Only her large eyes and pointed ears suggested she was not human. She spoke perfect English, another thing that differentiated her from House Elves.

She led them to a huge, marble stair case and up to the second floor describing rooms as she went. The girls learned that the First Floor was the Master's apartments, but that as a member of the family, they had near full access. The Second Floor had been guest suites, and that's where they would sleep for now. In the center of the floor was the guest common areas that included a Dining Room, huge lounge and smaller sitting rooms. Of two either side were ten guest suites, each with two bedrooms, two full bathrooms and a large common room. Tarla lead them down a long corridor until they came to a door with a large numeral four on it.

The room they entered was huge for a private sitting room. There was a large fireplace set against the far wall framed by two large windows and a set of French doors leading to what they were told was a private balcony. There was a table that had six chairs around it for private meals. Three couches and several comfortable chairs also graced the room and allowed for two distinct sitting areas. There was even a piano, which both girls had learned before they went to Hogwarts.

The two bedrooms were at least as large as any they had ever seen. Each had a large, four poster and canopied bed flanked by a night stand on either side, it's own sitting area, fireplace, large windows

and doors to their balcony, dressers, a dressing table and vanity, a desk and chair. Each seemed to be decorated to their own taste, and how the elf knew that was anyone's guess. They each had a walk in closet that clearly could hold more clothes that anyone ought to have a right to own and a large private bath with a huge bathtub, private shower and more. In their rooms they found their trunks and suitcases, carefully lined against a wall and unopened.

When they returned to their common room, they saw a note had been left on what had to be a dining table - the one with all the chairs around it - and it was on top of a book. Daphne picked up the note and read aloud:

Daphne & Astoria:

The book is a catalog of paintings in storage here at the estate. Feel free to look through it and pick some with which to decorate your rooms. My personal recommendations are the French Impressionist works and there are three Monet's available! They are Muggle, but are considered amongst the world's finest works of art. Make your selections and let me know.

We are really happy you two have joined us. It will be a pleasure serving such wonderful young women! For now, I am your interim handmaiden, but I have hopes that one or both of you might consider it a permanent appointment!

Tarla.

The two sisters soon found themselves sitting out on their private balcony enjoying the lush, green landscape. Yet each was lost in her own thoughts and fears.

"Daph?" Astoria finally asked, "are you scared?"

"Terrified," Daphne admitted.

"Of what?"

“Of being a concubine? Of the fact that I am probably going to be raped today...”

“Harry Potter won’t...”

“He won’t be brutal,” Daphne agreed. “But are you truly going to admit that you would strip down and let him take you right now?”

Astoria shook her head. “Not that he’s a bad choice, but...”

“We’ll never have a husband,” Daphne said. “Even if he freed us, which he can’t because that would be cruel...”

“I admit, that scares me,” Astoria said. “But he did promise Daddy and us we would never be whored out. That’s not too bad, is it?”

Daphne thought for a moment. “Under the circumstances, no. But you can’t tell me you want this.”

“This over Malfoy!”

There was that, Daphne thought. Malfoy would have already taken them brutally. She had heard him boast to his mates about what he would do with a concubine, about how his house had cells so awful that the women begged to have sex just to leave them for a time. He bragged about how he would whore his women out. This was paradise in comparison. Still, it was not what she wanted for herself or her sister. Worse, she feared they would never leave and she would never see her family again.

“Still, I’m not sure I want to ...”

“To what?” Astoria asked.

“Do you want to lose your virginity today?” Daphne said. “We’re going to in most likelihood. We are going to become his lovers whether our choice or not!”

“I’m not sure I’m ready, Daph. But if I must ... You have to admit he’s a dish!”

“Still...”

“Daphne, he did tell us why we are here. He seems to care, which is more that we should expect, right?”

Her sister had a point.

“So the sex does not scare you?” she asked.

“I’m terrified,” Astoria admitted. “Of all the boys in school, why him?”

Why indeed, Daphne thought.

“In a couple of years, maybe,” Astoria went on, “but why now? I’m still a girl on the outside! Only my insides are woman! Why couldn’t he wait...”

“Sissy?”

“Daph, I have a huge crush on him! Not that Boy-Who-Lived nonsense - HIM! He’s a nice boy and a looker and he can play Quidditch with the best of them. That year when he took on a dragon...”

Daphne nodded.

“And yet he’s still a nice boy. He’s only mean to people who are mean to him. I dropped my books once. It was sort of on purpose and he stopped and helped me pick them up! He was with that Git Weasley who yelled at him about helping a snake like me, but he ignored him. He’s nice and a little shy and... Well, aside from Granger, he can barely speak a sentence around a girl and...”

Daphne nodded in agreement. She too had a bit of a crush on him.

“What if he finds me revolting?” Astoria said. “I’m not sure I could handle that!”

Daphne thought for a long while. “You know what scares me, Sissy?”

“No,” Astoria said.

“We might never see Mum, Daddy, Rachel, Maria or Pattie again. I think I can handle the rest, but that scares me.”

The two sat in silence until Tarla called them down for lunch. They both loved their family and both felt this meant they would never see them again despite what Harry had told them.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how. Someone suggested I tighten this up a bit and made a good suggestion as to how. From now on, details beyond name, age and bond status will only be included when they are either new or change.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16; CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Nymphadora (Dora) Tonks, age 21; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace McGonagall, age 68; CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle Grant, age 39; CONCUBINE (BLACK).

(Hope that’s easier)

To answer some questions (partially):

Minerva’s age. Yes, she’s 68. But she’s also a witch. Physically, they age like us until sometime in their twenties when it slows down. Their life expectancy is about twice that of the rest of us. True, Minerva looked stern when she was a professor, but in such intimate settings she looks younger (roughly ½ her age, maybe a little older).

Concubine Property Rights: There are no laws one way or another. Basically, Concubines are and have what their “Master” allows them to be and to have. They can be quite wealthy in their own right (if allowed) or have nothing. They can have jobs (unrelated to sex) or not. They can keep their earnings or not. It all depends upon their wizard. (Which means many of them are not well treated.) (This also answers another question about why there are accomplished women. If they are allowed to be, they can be. Amelia is a widowed Consort – and the Consort Bond promotes partnership as a couple.)

How can Susan Bones be up for Auction if her Aunt is still alive? It is a wizard who makes that decision.

Why aren't Hermione's parents here? There have been many hints. There is some question as to whether they could pass through the wards prior to Harry taking his Potter Ring (Hermione gets through because of their emotional relationship, something Harry has barely begun to develop with her parents). But the letter from Sirius was a huge clue. Sirius hoped they would bond as Consort and Husband. That would be rather difficult if her parents were milling about.

Where's Dumbledore? First, it's been less than a week and he left watching Harry to others (who saw to it Harry was moved to his Estate, and they're not telling.) Second, right now he's out of the country anyway.

Review this Story/Chapter

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN: BREAKING SLYTHERIN

FRIDAY JUNE 28, 1996 - Potter Manor

The lunch on the veranda was very pleasant. The scenery was stunning and the two Greengrass girls were assured that everything they could see was part of the Estate, and that it even went off over the horizon. They might be stuck here, but it was a pleasant place to be. The conversation was mostly about school work and their family and they were actually able to relax a little. But as the meal ended, they both knew that the bonding was not a long time coming and they both began to get nervous about it. Daphne had to admit that while the thought of losing her virtue to Harry was not unpleasant, it was the fact that her sister and women she did not know would be watching that really unnerved her.

Once the lunch was finished and the dishes were cleared away, Harry, Hermione and Dora left them. An elf showed up to escort them to where they would become part of the family. They were led through several large, ornate and formal rooms before arriving at two huge wooden doors. The elf opened the door and let them in. Daphne could not believe her eyes. It easily had to be the largest library she had ever seen and the furnishings and wood work alone must have cost a small fortune. The books had to be worth and even larger one. Both of the girls stood gaping in awe at the sight. Their trancelike state was finally broken by a voice. They turned and saw Hermione, who was now wearing a blue silk robe and matching slippers. She bade them to have a seat on one of the long, padded and comfortable looking reading couches. She conjured for five high back chairs and arranged them in a slight semi-circle facing the two girls.

“This is where Harry and I lost our virginity together,” Hermione said softly. “It is where I became his Consort for life and where he has bonded with each of his Concubines.”

Daphne thought it was almost too funny. Hermione losing her virginity in a library? Then again, that was not so much of a surprise. Daphne did decide not to say anything and noted that the couch was actually quite comfortable.

Hermione was soon joined by Dora. She was also wearing a silk robe and slippers.

“I’m Nymphadora Tonks,” Dora said formally. “I am an Auror. Sirius Black was my first cousin once removed and I was his Concubine. I was contracted to him before I was born. I was bound to him by his friend when I was twelve.”

A third woman entered. She was also in a similar robe and looked much older than the other two.

“I am Healer Mallory Grant,” she said. “I’ve been a Black concubine for twenty-two years since I was seventeen years old. Welcome. For the one who will remain a Black Concubine, I am the House Matron.”

As soon as she sat in her chair, they noticed a fourth woman enter, also dressed in robes. This woman they recognized. Both of them were stunned to see their Transfiguration Professor and Deputy Headmistress.

“Professor?” Daphne and Astoria asked.

“It’s Minerva or Minnie, please,” Minerva said. “Here I am the Potter House Matron. I’ve been a Potter Concubine for fifty-three years and now am serving my third Lord Potter.”

“He’s had sex with you?” Astoria blurted out before covering her mouth in embarrassment.

“He has indeed,” Minerva smiles. “And I dare say he may whenever he likes within reason.” She took her seat. “Now, have you two decided who will join my house?”

The two girls nodded as Astoria slowly raised her hand.

“Very good,” Minerva smiled.



Harry now entered, also dressed in robes. He stood in the middle of the space between the Greengrass girls and the others and faced them.

“Daphne Rene Greengrass and Astoria Lynn Greengrass I, Harry James Potter, by right of inheritance Lord Black and Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black pursuant to contract executed in my favor by your father in exchange for valuable consideration, take you Daphne and Astoria as my Concubines. Your mind, body, heart, soul and magic are mine, bound as slave to master, you are mine to command as I will and to use as I please, from this day forward until death shall separate you from my House and Heirs. Do you understand?”

They both nodded.

“Budge over,” Harry said. They complied but were a little confused.

Harry sat between them, placed an arm around each of their shoulders. He then leaned towards Daphne and kissed her on the lips. It was soft and gentle and not at all what she expected. She could not help but to kiss back. She had no idea how long they kissed and gently wrestled with each other's tongues. It was passionate, yet kind, tender and giving as well, she thought. It was without a doubt amazing. She was pleased she was seated, because it would have left her weak at the knees. So unlike the snogs she saw in the Common Room that seemed to be more about male domination and female submission than anything more romantic. Not long after the kiss broke, Harry smiled at her before turning to Astoria and drawing her into a kiss as well. Daphne could tell from the little moans her sister was making that Astoria was enjoying it as much as she had.

When that kiss finally broke, Harry spoke for the first time in minutes. “As you are - er - virgins and are probably more than a little scared and nervous, one of my ladies thought it might be a good idea for there to be a demonstration.”

Daphne wondered what that meant but then noticed as McGonagall rose from her chair and slowly began walking towards them with a

bemused expression on her face as she untied the sash to her robes and let them slide off onto the floor. She was not wearing anything beneath her robes. Daphne thought that naked and with that expression, one she had never seen on the woman's face before, she actually looked decades younger than usual. McGonagall knelt between Harry's legs, undid the sash on his robes and opened them, exposing Harry in his full glory for the first time.

Daphne was stunned. Her jaw was hanging open at the sight of what was easily the largest one of those she had ever seen. Perhaps, it was an illusion as she had never been so close to one, preferring to hurry through the Common Room while the Slytherin boys were getting their kicks with both willing and unwilling girls. But something told her that this was not the case. Harry was larger than anyone she had ever seen. She watched in stunned silence as McGonagall bent down and began licking Harry's bulging monster. It was not long before she watched her Transfiguration teacher take Harry into her mouth. Was it just Daphne, or was McGonagall eager? She seemed eager. She took all of him in. His hand was running through her hair as she bobbed up and down. So un-Slytherin, Daphne thought. No force, then again none seemed needed. She could hear Harry's breath getting ragged, see the expression of pleasure on his face and feel him tensing up. McGonagall must know what she's doing, Daphne thought just as she sensed by Harry's reaction he had climaxed. It was several seconds, maybe more than a minute before McGonagall released him from her mouth and the monster was gone. "Little Harry" almost looked cute.

McGonagall was soon in his lap, straddling him, facing him, kissing him with passion and desire, sighing and moaning into his lips as his hands explored her. She rose up slightly and Daphne watched as she offered him a breast, which he took into his mouth. His hand was between her legs. Her face was one of pleasure and desire, eyes closed, mouth alternating between being open and biting a lip as sighs, gasps and low moans passed her lips. Harry's fingers were inside her now and she was thrusting into his hand as he continued to pleasure her. "I'm coming," she moaned softly, yet Harry did not stop until she rode out her orgasm. Only then did he slowly remove his hand from her.

The monster was back again, and McGonagall was guiding it into her sex, slowly thrusting down up it until it was all gone. Slytherin girls lay there and took it. Apparently, that was not the case here, as McGonagall was riding Harry up and down, gasping at times, kissing him at others. Her pace quickened. She came. She slowed but did not stop. All of this was happening inches from Daphne. Her leg was actually touching McGonagall's and she could feel the muscles tense and relax as the older witch rode up and down on Harry. McGonagall tossed her head back as a second orgasm washed over her and Daphne could sense Harry was finishing as well. It took the witch a bit to catch her breath. She then kissed Harry for a few seconds before climbing out of his lap and returning to her chair on shaking legs. When she turned to sit, she had a smile on her face Daphne had never seen before.

Oddly, Daphne thought, the "demonstration" seemed to work. She knew she was aroused. She could feel it between her legs. When she looked at her sister who was looking at her, she saw her sister was there too. Gone was the nervousness and fear. It was replaced by something she had never really felt before - desire. Still... McGonagall had been a concubine for over fifty years. Would it be the same for her sister and her? Aside from masturbating, neither of them had so much as kissed a boy until today much less have sex.

Finally, Harry caught his breath. "Okay, have you two decided which of you will transfer to House Potter?"

"Yes," Daphne and Astoria said.

"Who is it?"

"Me," Astoria said softly.

"Right then, then you're up first," Harry said. "Stand, face me and take off your clothes."

Daphne was worried Harry might be disappointed. Astoria was a typical daughter of her mother as she had been. They became menstrual before turning teenagers, but did not begin to develop into

women for ages after. Like Astoria, Daphne was still a girl at her age and only just beginning to develop into a woman. They were late bloomers in that regard, but bloom they did, and that was why Daphne was now avoiding the Slytherin boys. Try as she might, she could no longer hide the fact that she had the best rack in her year in Slytherin House, which was why Malfoy wanted to break her and if necessary rape her. Astoria was only beginning to develop into the woman she would be. She had breasts, but they were small. The hair between her legs was only now becoming visible. Would Harry be upset?

To Daphne's dismay, Harry told her sister to raise her arms and turn around. Hermione walked up and did something with her wand. Harry said she was now a 'Harry Girl' and chuckled as he explained that the 'uniform' meant no hair aside from that on top of one's head. He also said he was going to enjoy watching as Astoria blossomed into a woman and Daphne knew he meant watching her blossom without clothing to hide it.

Daphne watched as Harry kissed her sister and she eagerly kissed back, as Harry caressed her, gently fondled her and as Astoria moaned in pleasure at the touch. She watched as Harry's hand and fingers entered her feminine folds and soon her sex and watched her sister's reaction as it was clear Astoria was in heaven. She watched as her sister's knees buckled and as Harry had to hold her up as what had to have been a huge orgasm washed over her.

Harry sat down. His monster was back. Daphne had seen the look of concern on Astoria's face when it first was revealed. Her sister was certainly concerned about it, maybe even scared. Not now. She was between his legs in a flash and all Harry could manage to say was "Suck..." before she had taken him into her mouth. She was not quite capable of taking all of him in, but she bobbed up and down eagerly and quickly. Harry stroked her hair and did not force her deeper as Daphne had seen Slytherin boys do. Daphne heard his groan minutes later, heard her sister moan with what sounded almost like pleasure even after it was certain to her he had come in her sister's mouth. Like McGonagall, Astoria did not stop right away.

When she did, she was soon lying next to Daphne on the couch, her head only inches away from where Daphne was sitting. Daphne watched as Astoria was kissed and caressed. She watched as Harry suckled her and saw the pleasure on Astoria's face. While Astoria might not have large breasts and was only now about to graduate from her training bra, she did have large nipples. When Harry seemed to finish, Daphne noted that they were rock hard. She watched as he went further down her body, heard her sister moan, saw the pleasure on her face, and then saw him start licking her sister's sex. Astoria was all but thrashing about in pleasure. Her back soon arched, she squealed she was coming and she looked as if she really had. She was begging him to enter her! Daphne had never saw much less heard of a girl begging for it! She watched her sister as Astoria clearly guided Harry in. While she heard and saw Astoria react in pain as Astoria's maidenhood vanished, she heard Astoria beg Harry not to stop. When Harry finally came, Daphne knew her sister had more than one orgasm. Astoria had a goofy grin that Daphne had never seen before. She looked her younger sister in the eyes and knew. Her sister's fears were gone. Her sister felt loved and, more important, safe. Daphne watched as Astoria cuddled into Harry's arms for several minutes and a content look crossed over her face.

After several minutes, Harry whispered to Astoria: "You okay?"

"Hmmm." she sighed contentedly.

"Can I get up now?"

"One - no two conditions," Astoria said.

"And they are?"

"First, promise you'll let me see my family again, if you can?"

"I already have."

"Second, make my sister this happy too."

“I can only try.”

“Try then.”

“Yes Ma’am,” Harry replied getting a giggle out of Astoria.

“Daph?” Astoria asked.

“Y-yes,” Daphne replied.

“I’m here for you! Just as you were for me! And you’re going to love this!”

Daphne both wanted to and did not want to. She knew the bonding would compel her to, still was this the bond or something else? She stood, faced Harry and her sister and began to undress. She was blushing furiously not so much because she was undressing, but because she knew she had worn colored, cotton knickers and she knew they were now soaking from her anticipation.

When Harry saw them, he teased her. “Eager, aren’t we?”

Daphne rolled her eyes as she stripped off what remained of her clothes. Hermione was then asked to do whatever she had done and what hair Daphne had below her blonde haired head was now gone.

She was still facing the other witches, her back to her sister when she first felt a presence behind her and then arms reaching around her from behind. A kiss on her right shoulder was followed by more as two hands gently caressed her sides and abdomen avoiding anything sensitive for now. She could feel the strength in his arms despite his gentle touch as his kisses worked closer to her neck, cheek, she felt her earlobe nibbled gently, a kiss on her temple, he seemed to be...

She turned her face towards him wanting his lips on hers. An arm reached back finding his head and hair and she was now running her fingers through his locks as short as they were. Her lips finally found his as his hands worked their way upwards and became for a moment a temporary bra causing her to moan in pleasure under his

touch. He soon focused his hands and fingers on her hard nipples, eliciting even more pleasure from her. She could feel him behind her. His arousal was pushing ever so slightly yet deliberately against one of the cheeks of her back side. She did not want him there, at least not in there, but... She shifted and felt that wonderful rod between her cheeks where, because it was not threatening penetration, she captured it in a clench of her cheeks and released as her gasps and moans from his kissing and caresses filled the air.

“More,” she begged him as she then felt a hand slip off her breast and now very swollen nipple. His hand moved towards her womanhood and she wanted “More!” She felt his dry finger slide into her folds and begin rubbing her nub, but it was dry for only a moment and soon she was groaning with pleasure such as she could not have known was possible in life. Her knees wobbles, but one of them was willing her to stand and take his fire as she clenched and unclenched her cheeks with his cock now quite content to remain between them. She was building beyond pleasure so fast. His fingers entered her and that seemed to be all it took. The most powerful orgasm she ever had washed over her and if he had not been ready and holding her, she would have fallen over. His finger drove into her gently yet firmly enough. He kept it up as she proclaimed her climax to him and anyone else listening and did not care. He kept at it, letting her ride out the storm that ravaged her. It was only as she went limp from satisfaction that he finally removed his hand from her sex and allowed her a brief moment’s respite, still holding her up and kissing her.

Daphne was slowly beginning to recover her senses and now knew how her sister could have been so eager. She now wanted this boy who was holding her in his arms. She wanted to please him just as he had pleased her and maybe even more so. Was this the bond, she asked herself. Was this real? Did it even matter?

At Harry’s command, she left his lap and remained kneeling on the floor and she watched as Harry took a seat on the long bench beside Astoria, who leant into his side and rested her head against his shoulder. Should she feel jealous, Daphne asked herself? She didn’t. She crept forward, her blue eyes gazing into his wonderful green ones. She gently spread his knees apart and moved even closer, still staring into those wonderful eyes of his. She rubbed his thighs with

her hands, silently begging him to tell her what she knew he had to tell her. She looked at his fully enraged monster. It still looked big, but now she wanted it! She wanted Harry in her!

“Suck me off,” Harry said in a soft and gentle voice. He was gazing into her blue eyes as he said this.

Daphne smiled at Harry as she found his monster and wrapped a hand around its base. She bent over, looking at it closely as she felt it in her hand. Hard, yet soft as well, she thought to herself as she kissed its crown. She wanted to taste it and began licking the tip, swirling her tongue around it and hoping he liked this introduction. She felt a slight shudder from him, which she hoped was a good sign as she wrapped her lips firmly around him and drew him into her mouth.

He was big, she thought. But what really surprised her was she really enjoyed having him in her mouth. She slowly pulled back, savoring his scent and the textures against her tongue. She pushed herself down on him again, further this time before drawing back. On her third thrust, she took him all the way down to where her hand still gripped him at the base. Her fifth and that silly hand just had to go. She wanted all of Harry! Her next thrust she took him all in and was certain he might actually be down her throat but his moan of pleasure and his hand gently playing within her blonde hair made it worth it. She knew she could not take him that deep every time, but figured every once in a while was fine. He was begging her to be faster, which also meant she could not take him all the way in all the time, but she did not mind. She wanted him to enjoy this. She wanted him to come. She wanted him to come in her mouth. She wanted to taste it. All of these thoughts had never crossed her mind before.

She could feel him reacting, hear his breathing change and hear his moans. She wanted him to enjoy this. Was this the bond? Was this real? Both maybe? She did not care. She wanted him. She could feel the moisture between her legs. She wanted him! She wanted him forever!

She was dying in anticipation, her own arousal growing by the second. She wanted to feel him come, feel his seed in her. His breath was



erratic. She felt him tense up and thrust his hips to her. She felt a pulse along the shaft of his cock and something warm and wet in the back of her mouth. He continued to pulse and fill her and she finally tasted him. It was neither good nor bad. She swallowed every drop as she continued to suck on his cock. She could feel it getting softer and smaller in her mouth and this was thrilling to her as well. Harry felt relaxed beneath her and his monster was soon reduced to little Harry in her mouth and between her lips. She let him go and kissed little Harry before laying her cheek against it and in Harry's lap while they both caught their breath.

Some minutes later, Daphne was laying on her back on the bench inches from her little sister who was looking at her with a bemused expression on her face. Harry was on top of her, kissing her and running his fingers through her hair gently. Before today, Daphne had never kissed a boy - or a girl for that matter, unless one counted a kiss on the cheek. She really was in no position to judge, but she believed that Harry was a really good kisser. He moved away from her swollen lips, allowing her to gulp air as he kissed her neck, and shoulders and lower. His chin was now touching the upper swell of her breasts and he was slowly moving lower.

She moaned and nearly came when he took her nipple into his mouth for the first time. His lips, his tongue, they were both doing things to her she had never thought possible as he thorough explored this new place. She hoped he would do the other breast too and she was not disappointed. As he worked his magic on his new friend, she was silently begging him for more. Every touch seemed to set her afire. She was running a hand through his raven hair. She wanted more! She wanted a release from this excitement that was building within her by the second.

He had left her breasts behind and was slowly trailing kissed downward. She could barely stand the anticipation. Without even thinking about it, just as he stuck his wonderful tongue into her belly button, she spread her legs wide, inviting him to her. She was wet and ready and wanted him. She had no idea she could want this so much. He was almost there, almost where she needed him to be and every kiss and touch he gave was amazing. He seemed to know just how to please her. He reached her sex and the second his tongue

slipped between her folds in search of her clit, she arched her back and thrust into him as an orgasm she had not been expecting washed over her in waves.

He stopped what he was doing and her eyes flew open. She looked down and saw he was looking at her.

“Do you want me to stop?” he asked.

“N-no,” she gasped. “M-more?” she begged.

“Good Girl,” he said with a smile, “because I had no intention of letting you off that easy.”

“P-Please!” Daphne begged. She was duly rewarded as Harry and his wonderful tongue returned to her and began to work her up again. She was soon gasping and moaning beneath him, thrusting herself to him, wanting him, wanting what he could do to her. She felt his tongue enter her and was in heaven. It had to be, because it felt like he was filling her and that could not be possible, could it? Possible or not, she could no longer hold back.

“I'M COMING!” she screamed as the most powerful orgasm she could remember hit. He kept at her, letting her complete. Only when she went limp did he stop.

He was soon back to kissing her. She had not remembered much of what had happened from the moment she came down from her orgasm until his lips were pressing against hers and she really did not care. She was in heaven in his arms and wondered whether her sister had felt this way. Something told her that she had. A part of her wondered whether this was what it was like for a concubine or whether this was unique somehow. She hoped it truly was special.

She felt his monster was back. She could feel it against her and she did not want to wait any longer. She wanted him inside of her. Daphne reached down and found it, stroking it gently for just a moment before gripping it slightly and guiding it to her. He was at her entrance and seemed to be waiting for some reason.

“I want you,” she whispered. “Please?”

He began pushing forward as she guided him inside her. Deeper and deeper he went and she felt a moment of sharp pain, but only a moment. He felt wonderful! He was all the way in and she thrust into him encouraging him. His next thrust caused her to moan with pleasure and desire. It was so amazing! She wanted it! She wanted him! She could not believe this! She joined him in rhythm, something she knew she had never seen once in her House Common Room. They just lay there and took it. It was obvious to her now they were never with a man who could give so much pleasure. She now doubted whether any of those Slytherin boys had ever brought a woman to orgasm or whether they even cared. Harry certainly did.

She had a huge orgasm, but Harry was not there yet. He continued thrusting into her and to her amazement, she soon felt the pleasure building within her again. She hoped he would not finish until she did. She really hoped that they could come together. She felt her pleasure building to a new and unbelievable peak. It hit her suddenly.

“I’M COMING!” she moaned and felt Harry go tense. She felt something inside of her and knew that he had finished as well. He collapsed into her arms and lay there, holding her. Part of her wished she could be held like this forever. Another part knew that she would be. True, she was not Harry’s only lover. But she was his lover and she knew that would be enough. That, she mused, was a thought she never would have had when she woke up this morning.

When Harry finally let her go, Daphne realized something. Harry had held her just long enough for it to seem perfect. He had done so each time. Thinking about it she realized he had also done so for Astoria and Minerva. The result surprised her. She felt loved.

“Okay Dora,” Harry said. Daphne looked and saw he was standing now. “You’re turn,” Harry added.

Daphne watched as Dora stood with a large smile on her face as she took off her robe. The witch clearly had the largest breasts in the

room, Daphne thought. Dora was soon in Harry arms and was lost in his kiss. I should feel jealous, Daphne thought. But she didn't. She felt that the witch in Harry's arms deserved him just as much as she did and was actually pleased that Harry was including her. She then noticed something. Dora had a black ribbon around her neck. She had not noticed before.

She turned to her sister and saw that Astoria also had a black ribbon around her neck with a silver scripted "B" at the center of her throat. She knew that was not there before. She could see her sister looking at her neck as Astoria absently touched the ribbon around her neck with her hand. Daphne reached to her own neck and felt a ribbon there too. She looked back at the others while Harry and Dora continued to kiss. Minerva, who were still quite naked, and Mallory also had back ribbons that Daphne knew were not there before. Hermione had a gold ribbon.

"Let's show them that neat game you taught Hermione and me," Harry said to Dora who nodded vigorously.

Daphne wondered what this was about. She watched as Harry lay down on his back on the carpet. Dora knelt down over his face facing his feet. She lowered herself onto him, giving him access to her sex as she then leaned forward to lie on top of him as she took him into her mouth. It looked so erotic! It also told something about Harry. He wanted his women to enjoy him this way. He wanted them to feel pleasure. After her years in Slytherin, Daphne had been convinced that sex was all about boys getting off, dominating girls, and babies. Obviously, she was wrong. She had not felt dominated by Harry. She felt she was sharing with Harry and this act, one where Harry was not in total control, proved that was how Harry saw the physical act of love.

Daphne looked over at the other witches. Perhaps this was one act too many for them as all three were now rubbing themselves off. Dora was moaning as she continued to suck Harry's monster. She soon stopped and it was clear to Daphne that Harry had finished. Dora had not and was begging Harry for more and, as she lay atop Harry with her face in his lap, he did not let up. Her moans and panting filled the

air for the next couple of minutes, getting louder and more ragged until she finally announced her orgasm to the world.

Harry recovered quickly which puzzled Daphne. He had had sex - she counted on her fingers - seven times so far. She had no idea how much time had elapsed, but this explained some comments from before. She was certain he was going to have sex with all of his women today and was also almost certain that most men could not have done that even if they wanted to.

Dora was now straddling Harry's hips, he was inside of her and she was rocking back and forth. Her arms were on his shoulders as she held herself up, giving Harry access to her ample bosom as she controlled the sex. It was clear from the expression on her face as well as the sounds she was making that she was thoroughly enjoying riding Harry's broomstick. She had two orgasms, the last just as Harry came as well. Daphne found herself looking forward to what would soon come her way.

After giving Dora a cuddle, Harry got up and walked away to a table. Daphne noted that Dora got up as well and on unsteady legs, returned to her chair. She had a decidedly goofy grin on her face. Daphne looked over to Harry who seemed to be writing something. She could see him seal it with a ring, and when that was done he returned to them. He stood and faced Astoria.

"Astoria Lynn Greengrass: I, Harry James Potter, Lord Black and Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, do hereby inform you that I have sold you to Lord Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter. You are released from my House and Service!"

Daphne looked at her sister and saw that her black ribbon had disappeared. Astoria looked shocked. A tear fell from her eyes.

"Story, it's okay," Daphne said soothingly, wrapping her sister in her arms. "You'll be with him as Lord Potter."

"I - I know," Astoria said. "It still hurt! I want my ribbon back!"

“And you’ll get it back, Story.”

Astoria nodded as she looked up at Harry again.

“Astoria Lynn Greengrass: I, Harry James Potter, Lord Potter and Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter pursuant to contract executed in my favor by Lord Black in exchange for valuable consideration, take you Astoria as my Concubine. Your mind, body, heart, soul and magic are mine, bound as slave to master, you are mine to command as I will and to use as I please, from this day forward until death shall separate you from my House and Heirs. Do you understand?”

Daphne felt her sister relax.

“I do,” Astoria said enthusiastically.

“You saw what Dora and I did?” Harry asked.

Astoria nodded.

“I want you to do that to me!” Harry said as he lay on the floor.

Astoria practically leapt from the bench and was straddling Harry’s face only seconds later. She quickly lowered herself onto him and soon had him in her mouth, eagerly trying to please him as he was trying to please her. They brought each other to mutual climaxes fairly quickly, Daphne thought. Astoria rested for a bit before shifting around to kiss Harry senseless as she ground her hips into him trying to revive his monster. It did not seem to take long as Daphne soon saw her sister guiding Harry into her. Astoria was almost immediately thrusting herself up and down. Her expression told Daphne that she was enjoying it as Astoria sat up fully vertical and rode Harry for all he was worth.

Between her gasps and moans of pleasure, Astoria seemed to chant: “I want my ribbon back!” Daphne watched and when her sister’s second orgasm from riding Harry occurred, he came too, and the ribbon reappeared. Astoria collapsed into his arms and she rained

kisses on him, thanking him over and over again before finally settling down for a cuddle.

When Harry finally released Astoria from his arms, she seemed so happy to Daphne. She practically wobbled to her seat next to her sister and gave her a hug. "This is the best day of my life," Astoria whispered. "We can be with Harry forever, you know?"

Daphne nodded. Deep down she agreed. She looked at Harry and saw he was ready. Even before being told to, she rose to her feet and went to him to do what she wanted to do. She kissed him as thoroughly as she could before straddling his face and getting down to what she wanted to do to him and what she wanted him to do to her.

Sometime later, Daphne lay in Harry's arms. She had again sucked him and enjoyed every moment as he had also licked her to heaven and beyond. She had also ridden him for all she was worth and had the most memorable climaxes of the day with him. As she lay atop of him and melted into his arms, she knew she was his forever. Concubine bond be damned, she thought, she was a Harry Girl from now on! She liked the idea and promised herself she would have his children. Not yet, she thought, but soon.

She soon realized she was not alone. Her sister had joined them on the floor and was also cuddling into Harry.

"What's this?" Harry asked.

"Thank you Harry," Astoria said after kissing his cheek.

"F-for, for what?"

"You saved us when you did not have to," Astoria said.

"What?"

"You saved us," Daphne agreed as she kissed his cheek. "You saved our family. You took us in as concubines but have treated us

as women. You - maybe you can't help yourself, Harry, you made me feel loved!"

"I..."

"Me too," Astoria agreed. "I cannot help but love you too."

"I..."

"I love you, Harry," Daphne added.

"I don't understand," Harry complained. "You don't know me! You're just on about the Boy-Who-Lived."

Astoria giggled at the thought while Daphne shifted in his arms so she could look into Harry's eyes.

"We don't like the Boy-Who-Lived," Daphne said firmly. "What has he done? He merely survived. That's all. I don't care about that! I don't care about your money or your fame! What I've learned today...you could be a knutless, unknown and I would still care for you. I care for you because of what is in your heart, not your vault or on the pages of the Daily Prophet."

Daphne placed her hand on Harry's heart and was joined by her sister.

"Your wealth and fame mean little, Harry," Daphne said. "What really matters lies right beneath my hand. It is your heart. It is your heart that bound you and Hermione together. It is your heart that makes our bond all the more special. It is your heart that drives you forward when others would retreat and which saved my family, even though we were Slytherins and even though you did not know us at all. In the end, I believe it is this wonderful heart of yours that will save us all!"

Harry started to protest, but Daphne placed a finger on his lips.



“I am bonded to you Harry, yet I can speak my mind. I feel Story can too as she already has. I know that Dora, Minerva and Mallory can. Why? What I know of our bond says I cannot and neither can they. Why can I?”

“There is a fairy tale in our world about the perfect bonding. It is about a man who had so much love in his heart he could change the bonds he had with his women and turn them from slaves to wives. All it took for this to happen was for the women to realize they could be more than just a piece of meat to him, as they were more than that in his heart, and to declare it openly. It is a fairy tale, but most such tales either teach a lesson or the truth, Harry.”

Daphne placed her right hand on Harry’s heart after taking his right hand and placing it on hers. She stared into his wonderfully kind eyes.

“I, Daphne Renee Greengrass of my own free will, do hereby swear on my life and magic, that I will love, honor and cherish you, Harry James Potter, for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, in peace and in war and that I will love and support my sisters in all things, from this day forward until death shall separate me from my new family. Do you accept my oath in the spirit in which it was given?”

“Yes,” Harry said with a bemused expression on his face. As he said it, Daphne could swear she felt a wave of powerful magic course through her.

Daphne removed her hand from his chest and took Harry’s right hand from her own and guided it to her sister, who took Harry’s hand placing it over her own heart before she too placed her right hand over his.

“I, Astoria Lynn Greengrass...”

When Harry accepted Astoria’s oath, the other four witches joined them. Minerva and Hermione were kneeling just next where Astoria lay against Harry and Dora and Mallory just next to Daphne.

McGonagall leaned over Astoria and took Harry's right hand, placing it on her own heart as she placed her right hand over his.

"I, Minerva Grace McGonagall..."

The other two concubines soon followed.

"I, Mallory Michelle Grant..."

"I, Nymphadora Tonks..."

Finally Hermione leaned over. With his hand upon her heart and hers upon his, she said: "I need not make a vow to you, Harry my Love. I already have. But I am making this vow for my sisters. I, Hermione Jane Potter, of my own free will, do hereby swear on my life and magic, that I will love and support my sisters in all things, from this day forward until death shall separate me from my new family. Do you accept my oath in the spirit in which it was given?"

"Yes."

"Thank you Harry," Hermione said softly as she kneeled up. "Astoria? Please come and kneel between Minerva and me?"

Astoria got up and knelt between the two witches facing Harry. Minerva and Hermione each took her by the hand. Daphne was asked to do the same and was soon kneeling in between Dora and Mallory and holding their hands as well.

"What just happened?" Harry asked, still lying on the floor.

"After the rites are complete," Hermione promised softly. "Mallory?"

Mallory let go of Daphne's hand. She stood up and took off her robes before she walked over to settle herself on Harry's face, just as the other had. Daphne and the others watched in silence as Mallory and Harry had oral sex with one another, as they kissed and cuddled and as Mallory mounted him and made love to him. They watched in silence as Mallory had her third orgasm of the night and as Harry had

his own at the same time. They watched in silence as Hermione took off her robes, mounted Harry's face and took him into her mouth. They watched in silence as she rode his monster through two loud orgasms and as he came again in her.

After giving Hermione a long and tender cuddle, they got up. Hermione returned to her position kneeling to one side of Astoria and Harry was kneeling at the base of the formation, with a line of three what he considered very beautiful naked witches to either side of him.

"Now, what just happened?" he asked again.

"What Daphne started and we all did," Mallory began, "was a love bond. We bonded ourselves to you freely and out of the love we feel for you and you for us. I bonded that way with Sirius when you were just a baby."

"And I bonded that way with your Great-grandfather," Minerva said, "on my seventeenth Birthday. It means we are now more than just your concubines, Harry. We are bound to you as wives in all but law. Hermione is still your Consort and your Lady Potter, but in the Archives at the Ministry of Magic, we are no longer who we were before. I am again Minerva Potter, just as I was during my time with Charlus. Mallory is again Mallory Black, as she was with Sirius. Dora and Daphne are now Dora and Daphne Black and Astoria is Astoria Potter."

"The second part of the oath," Mallory continued, "bound the six of us together as sisters. We are now one family, Harry, and will be for the rest of our lives. Should you die before us, we will become free witches, and cannot be bound to another wizard against our will ever again. Thank you, Harry."

Harry could only nod feebly in response.

"Are you okay with this, Harry?" Hermione asked with a concerned tone in her voice.

Harry smiled and looked each of his women in the eyes before he responded. "I think it's brilliant," he said softly. "We should be a family."

Six smiling and clearly happy women smiled back at him.

"Right then," Hermione said. "Daphne and Astoria? We have robes and slippers for you. Put them on."

"What about our clothes?" Astoria asked.

"They will be taken care of. I think we all could use a half an hour to freshen up a bit and then dinner. I don't know about the rest of you but I am starving." As a group, they got up and put on their robes and slippers before leaving the Library.

As they walked through the Ground Floor, the girls were talking.

"I think I would like to try that oral sex thing with Harry for desert," McGonagall giggled. "It looks like fun."

"It is," Astoria said. "I really liked doing that!"

The others were in agreement.

"Okay, but try not to wear our Harry out."

"Why?" Harry asked.

"Because you're spending the night with two beautiful, young blonde witches, Silly."

"What about you?" Harry said in a slight panic.

"I'll be fine. I'll sleep in the Mistress's Room tonight. After all that has happened today, I think Daphne and Astoria are in greater need of an all night Harry cuddle than the rest of us."

Daphne lay in bed with a sleeping Harry, her head against his chest feeling more relaxed than she could remember. Hermione had insisted that Harry take her and Astoria into his bed that night given the stress and such and he had agreed, albeit reluctantly. He later explained it was because that even though Hermione was sleeping in the nearby Mistress's bedroom, he would miss having her in his arms for the night.

Astoria was on the other side of Harry, also using his chest as a pillow. He had made love to them two more times each, not counting his wonderful tongue, which he also seemed to enjoy using. Harry was asleep.

Daphne thought about this day. She woke up knowing her family was on the run from something. She found she and Astoria had been sold as slaves for all practical purposes. She had been both terrified and horrified, especially because she had been certain it was Draco Malfoy to whom she had been sold. Yet now, here she was. Surprisingly happy about the turn of events and her only regret was this boy would not be in her arms every night for the rest of her life.

"Daph?" a voice whispered. It was her sister.

"Yeah?"

"In the end, this was a good day."

"It was," Daphne agreed.

"D-do you think he will love us?"

"Like Hermione?"

Daphne could see Astoria nodding tentatively.

"Don't know," Daphne admitted. "Doubt it."

“D-do you think he will love us at all?” There was a whimper in Astoria’s voice. The first hint of fear from her sister in hours had surfaced.

“Yes Sissy,” Daphne said. “I think he will.”

“Good,” Astoria said seeming to relax. “I know I can love him.”

“Me too.”

“Daph?”

“Yeah?”

“Thank you for being with me today,” Astoria said. “It was wonderful. But your being here made it special.”

“What do you mean?”

“I became a woman today, and you shared that with me. Thanks.”

“You made it special too, Sissy.”

“I’m still gonna miss Mum, Dad and the others though.”

“Me too. But Harry did say he would do something about it.”

“This isn’t what I expected when Daddy said...”

“No.”

“It’s so much better.”

“Yes, it is.”

“Good night Daph.”

“Night, Sissy.”

“First one up gets first dibs!” Astoria giggled.

“As long as there’s something left, who cares?”

“You’re right. 'Night!”

“Sweet dreams.”

Astoria giggled. “I’m going to have wonderful dreams about this and about one day having his babies.”

“Me too,” Daphne admitted. “Me too.”

Two very contented young witches fell asleep in Harry’s arms. It was not just the sex, although that had been amazing. It was everything, Daphne thought as she dreamed of Harry and a future.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16; CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Lady Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Lady Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68; CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Lady Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Lady Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (11/10/79); CONCUBINE HOUSE OF BLACK 6/28/96.
6. Lady Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (10/3/81); CONCUBINE HOUSE POTTER 6/28/96.

The different last names here reflect the effect of the cross-bonding and love bonds. The first name is the House of their primary bonding,

the second is the name of the secondary bonding. They haven't figured this out yet.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: HARRY'S HAREM

SATURDAY JUNE 29, 1996 - Potter Manor

Daphne awoke a little confused. As her eyes began to focus in the morning light and her senses became aware, she knew she was somewhere strange. This wasn't her room. This wasn't her pillow her head was resting against and her pillow certainly did not have a heartbeat and never was this warm and cozy. She then began to remember. She saw where she was and remembered. Her head was laying on Harry Potter's chest and she and her sister were in bed with him and bound to him as his concubines - and more. She remembered he was going to let them have his children one day. She remembered she was now his wife in all but the eyes of the law, as was her sister.

Certainly she felt like it as she thought about things and her brain started to process again what had transpired. She knew she was more his wife than many a Pureblood witch had ever known of that term. She knew he had not bound to her for money or power, but to save her and her family. She remembered more. She would never mean as much as Hermione Granger in his eyes, but she sensed he cared about her at least on some level. So unlike most Purebloods. He cared about her and her sister as people and not means to an end.

Concubine, yes she and her sister were that. But he did not treat her like she had heard. True, it had been less than a day since she had entered this life and yes it was against her will to an extent. What person would want to be a concubine? But he was different in so many wonderful ways. No! She was a wife and not a slave! A lesser wife, perhaps, but she felt he would protect her and see to her as any husband should for any wife. And, as she relaxed into his arms, she knew she would do all she could for him too.

She looked over and saw her sister stirring as well. Astoria had a content expression on her face; one Daphne never remembered seeing before. Daphne felt this was more than just the bond and magic and certainly more than the sex - which had been amazing - this was something more for her and her sister. She looked over at her sister and saw Astoria's eyes were opened. Daphne still could not

believe how wonderful yesterday had become for her and could see in her sister's eyes a similar feeling.

Astoria whispered: "Good morning, Mrs. Black."

Astoria was obviously thinking along very similar lines. "And to you, Mrs. Potter," Daphne whispered back, hoping Harry was still in a deep sleep as the two girls giggled silently.

Harry chuckled beneath her and her sister. "So who should I officially wake up first? Mrs. Black or Mrs. Potter?" It was meant as a bit of a joke, just as it had been between the two sisters, but it had also gave Harry an idea.

After pleasuring the two sisters and himself, and then a nice bath with them, Harry had them throw on the robes they were given last night and their slippers and led them from the Master's Suite to the private dining room for breakfast. Minerva, Mallory and Dora were already there, similarly attired, but Hermione was missing. Harry did not think much of that as she was still sleeping late as a result of the injuries she had sustained two weeks earlier. Besides, it was a Saturday and Harry was going to declare this a weekend where he could get out and explore his estate for once, so why not let his women have a relaxing weekend as well?

Harry and the Greengrass girls were already eating when Hermione finally arrived. To Harry, she looked like death warmed over. She was pale and had a sickly expression on her face. She did not look well at all.

"Are you all right, Hermione?" he asked.

"Fine," she snapped at him without warning. She then hung her head. "Sorry, Harry. Female issues."

Harry looked confused.

"Monthly bill?" Mallory asked.

Hermione nodded. "And I ran out of my potion!"

"I have some in my room," Mallory said. "A good gynecologist never leaves the hospital without a supply just in case one of my patients needs a house call. Are your periods difficult?"

Hermione nodded.

"What's that mean?" Harry asked.

"Don't tell me you don't know what a woman's period is," Daphne started.

"Well, Hermione did tell me, but I don't know what it does to her."

"You've known her for years," Daphne protested.

"I didn't know about this until a few days ago. I mean, I know she gets moody from time to time..."

"' Bout once a month or so, right?"

Harry thought about that. He nodded. "She told me about this Sunday. I know what it is, but not what it means."

"It means I'm hormonal! I am cranky and irritable! I ache all over! I just spent fifteen minutes face down in the toilet tossing my cookies! I hurt! The Elves will have to change the bed linens on my bed! I'm going to have mood swings! I feel fat, ugly and icky all over!"

"I'll go fetch the potion," Mallory said getting up from the table.

"Th-thanks," Hermione whimpered. "Sorry Harry."

"Don't apologize for being a woman," Harry said. "I should be sorry for not knowing what you go through every month, for not seeing it and not being there for you and ..."

“I mean I’m sorry. This is not about that. I feel so rotten that I can tell you I cannot make love to you until this is over.”

“H-how long?”

“Three days,” Hermione said in a small voice, “four at the most.”

“Oh. Well, I suppose,” Harry said sounding disappointed. “I guess I can last a few days without sex.”

“Don’t you dare,” Hermione growled.

“Excuse me?”

“Don’t you dare punish these other women like that!”

“I’m not, it’s not that...”

“Harry James! I will sleep in the Mistress’s Room until this is over. You will take two different women into your bed each night until then. You will have sex with the other three each day if they want, do I make myself clear?”

“Yes.”

“And, I said I can’t make love. You can still play with me - once the potion kicks in. You just can’t play in my Chamber of Secrets.”

“Really?” Harry said brightening up a little.

Hermione nodded. “Plus, I didn’t say anything about me not giving you blow jobs, did I?”

“No.”

“And I do intend to do that! If you think I am going to go three days without any Harry fun at all, you are mistaken, Buster.”

"I ... okay," Harry said sounding guilty. "I didn't mean..."

"Harry, it's okay," Hermione said. "I know that they don't teach you boys anything about this in school."

"Not that I haven't tried," McGonagall said deciding to change the topic. "For years I have argued with Dumbledore that you boys need to learn about this. This and the girls - especially Muggle Borns like Hermione need to learn about our culture and what can happen to them."

"Concubines?" Harry asked.

McGonagall nodded. "Albus would hear none of it! He felt that boys had no reason to learn such things and telling the Muggle Born girls they could be sold as concubines would result in them leaving school and our world altogether."

"Thus depriving him of a major source of income," Dora added.

"WHAT?" Daphne exclaimed! "What do you mean?"

"Dumbledore is the Magical Guardian of all the Muggle Borns and Half-bloods with Muggle fathers at Hogwarts and throughout most of Britain," Dora replied. "Not to mention any other young witch without a designated Magical Guardian without regard to blood status. So, even if you're a pureblood, if your father is dead and you have no designated guardian, he becomes it. The war tends to kill off a fair few fathers, you know, so he has a fair few young witches under his guardianship. He sells a fair few every year."

"Who?" Daphne asked, "who this year?"

"Hannah Abbott," Harry began, "Katie Bell, Susan Bones, Lavender Brown, Cho Chang, Tracy Davis, Hermione, Teresa Murdoch, Padma and Parvati Patil, Sally-Anne Perks and Leanne Tinker, to name a few. My year in Gryffindor would be left without a single witch."

“They might still be there,” Astoria offered, “they just won’t be available.”

“That’s not the point! The point is...,” Harry shot back then felt guilty about it.

“The point is Dumbledore is selling us out as slaves,” Daphne said. “And Hermione?”

“She’s off the list. Once she became my Consort, she cannot be sold.”

“Were there any offers for her?”

Harry nodded. “Draco had a blind bid in on her. Apparently, there was an agent who made an offer for Ron Weasley.”

Daphne actually laughed.

“What?” Harry and Hermione asked.

“Fair bet Draco would have out bid the Weasley; especially to get at you, Milord. What’s funny is that Draco wanted the three of us and while we did wind up bound to the same man...”

“We got the better deal and Draco gets nothing,” Hermione finished.

“Exactly!” Daphne said. “Noodle Dick is going to have to find another outlet - Millicent Bulstrode perhaps?” she added with a laugh.

“Harry was our first time and for that I am eternally grateful,” Astoria said. “Had Harry not come along and taken us into his family, we were probably destined to be raped and gang banged in the Slytherin common room. Instead, we have a first time we can cherish forever. By the time Harry gave us the command and took us as his concubines, well even before then, by lunch had he asked I would have let him.”

Daphne nodded in agreement. "It helped, of course, that Harry was good! He has it and seems to know how to use it."

"He does indeed," McGonagall said. "Seems to run in the family."

"If Draco ever learns how wonderful Harry is," Astoria added, "well, he'll have another reason to hate Harry."

Harry heard a huff and looked at Minerva.

"Does Professor Snape know about what happens in your Common Room?" she asked with a shocked look on her face.

"Know about it?" Astoria said rolling her eyes. "Why do you think Daphne and I hide in the Library? Yes! We want good grades. But if we get raped, Snape will be there the next night for his share of the prize! And I swear, if that git as ever showered, it's news to me!"

"It's the only way that bastard could ever get shagged," Daphne added.

"That's horrible!" Minerva began. "That's..." She then looked at Harry and broke down in tears just as Mallory returned with a vial of potion for Hermione.

After handing Hermione the potion, Mallory returned to her seat next to Daphne and said: "I missed something, didn't I?" Daphne then began to whisper in Mallory's ear, filling her in.

Harry realized what had caused Minerva to break down in tears. He realized that she felt she was no better than Snape as she had slept with him. In Harry's mind - and in the other women's as well - Minerva was dead wrong. Harry got up and walked over to Dora who was sitting next to Minerva. "Switch?" he asked. Dora nodded and got up and Harry moved the chair next to Minerva. He sat down and pulled the crying witch into his arms.

"What's the matter?" Harry asked softly.

"I'm no better than Severus!" Minerva wailed. "I've slept with a student who trusted me!"

"You mean me, right? Or have there been others?"

"You, Harry. No others."

"You're not Snape then."

"H-How can y-you say that? I-I'm f-fifty three y-years older than you!"

"I can say that because your age does not matter to me," Harry replied softly. "I am with you not because you're my teacher or Head of House at school and you most certainly did not use your position to be here in my arms right now. Snape raped his students! I am with you for several reasons and none of them have force or rape involved. You are my family legacy. You were my grandfather's and great-grandfather's concubine. You loved great-granddad as I understand it. I had a choice as the next Lord Potter. I could take you in or let you go. You think those girls in Slytherin had a choice?"

"I took Mallory in on faith alone. Sorry Mal."

"No problem," she replied. "I am glad you did."

"It's only been a few days between us, Mal, but I can see why Sirius loved you."

Mallory blushed. "Thank you Harry."

"You're welcome and I mean it."

"Anyway, Minerva, I did not take you in because you made me and you know that. I had a choice. As your new 'Master' I could take you or let you go. I've known you for five years as my teacher and Head of House at school. Of all the adults I've known well in my life, you are one of the few I've truly respected and at the same time one of



the only who have not outright betrayed me. The Old Man has been betraying me from day one even if I only recently learned that. The Dursleys? Could care less what happens to them. The Weasleys? Molly's after my fortune. I cannot speak about Arthur. Hagrid thinks the Old Man shits sunshine, even though so far as I know he has yet to stab me in the back. You Minerva?

"You are one of the only adults whose look of disappointment in me kills me inside. I am thankful I seldom see that look, but it is crushing when I do. The only person who can cut me to the ground as effectively is Hermione. You have almost always listened to me and cut me slack when others would have been hung from their toenails for less. When my name came out of the Goblet of Fire, only two people believed in me and that I had nothing to do with that: you and Hermione.

"I hope you realize what special company that places you in, Minerva.

"I chose you, Minerva, not the other way around. I chose YOU!

"I gave you permission to have a child. Do you know why?"

Minerva was still crying and shook her head.

"A small part was because my Great-grandfather wanted that for you but was not allowed to deliver. The big reason is that every woman deserves that chance and that I think you'll make a wonderful Mum, even if you're a little along in years. I pray Hermione is right and that the bond has left you older and wiser in your head, yet young and fertile between your legs. You deserve a child, Minerva. All of my girls do, but you do especially!"

"So I'm n-not like S-Severus?"

"No, Minerva. You most certainly are not."

"Thank you, Harry." She then hugged him tight.

“You’re welcome. Now, after breakfast, and maybe a little Hermione play time, I think it’s time for us to visit my relations.”

“Wh-what do you mean?” McGonagall asked.

“My Granddad Charles left me a very special Pensieve and a lot has happened in the few days since Hermione, Remus and I visited them.”

“What are you talking about?” Dora asked.

“My parents and grandparents,” Harry replied. “I want you all to meet them.”

“But they are dead,” Minerva protested.

Harry nodded. “Granddad Charles made a special Pensieve. In it, they are not dead, dead.”

Harry reluctantly ordered his women to get dressed in real clothes and then meet him, also dressed in the Great Room. There, he would lead them to his family. As Harry led his “Girls” to the library, he described the special Pensieve to them but was not surprised that only Hermione, who had been with him before, believed him.

They descended into the Pensieve and found themselves in a sitting room similar to the one where Daphne and Astoria had first met with “Lord Black” and “Lady Potter.”

“Harry’s here!” a woman’s voice called and the door soon opened as an elderly woman entered the room. “Oh! And he’s brought Minnie with him! And some others.”

“Sam?” Minerva asked in surprise.

Samantha Potter walked over and hugged her old friend. “Harry did explain this, didn’t he?”

Minerva nodded. "It's quite impressive. It's good to see you again, Sam," she added with a hint of tears in her voice.

"To me," Samantha Potter said, "I last saw you the day before yesterday. But I understand it's been a while for you."

Minerva nodded. "You and Charles passed almost eight years ago," she said softly. "I have missed you both."

An elderly man entered and Minerva almost fell over. "Charles?" she asked as he wrapped her in a hug.

"It's good to see you too, Minnie."

After he backed away, a woman's voice called from the door followed by that of a man.

"Professor McGonagall?" the woman asked.

"Mallory?" the man followed.

Minerva and Mallory each recognized this young couple. It was James and Lily Potter. The shock was a little much for Minerva and she found she had to take a seat.

"That might be a good idea for everyone," Hermione said. "It's been four days for us since we last spoke and a lot has happened."

The projections of the dead Potters found seats as did all the real people except Harry. Harry noted that his Mum was sitting with arms folded against her chest and a raised eyebrow as if she was demanding an explanation.

Harry cleared his throat. "When last we met, there were some things we did not know and at least one thing I neglected to tell you. You see, when Sirius died he had no children. He named me his heir in his will and as my magical guardian, he emancipated me."

"Bloody hell!" James Potter said, "that means you're Lord Black!"

Harry nodded. "And Lord Potter as well. I think introductions are in order," he added. "Ladies?" he said looking back at his women, "may I introduce my Grandfather, Charles Potter and his wife and Consort, my Grandmother Samantha Potter."

The elderly couple nodded at Harry and his women.

"And this younger couple is my father James and his wife and Consort Lily."

James and Lily were still a little too confused to react.

"Minerva?" Harry asked. Minerva stood up and walked over to Harry. When she was standing in front of him, Harry pulled her into a long and tender kiss. She and Harry could not help but chuckle when they heard the gasps from his parents and grandparents.

When they broke, they turned to the elder Potters. Charles and Samantha seemed mildly amused while James and Lily were clearly in shock.

Harry chuckled again seeing the expression on his parent's faces. "Guess it's a good thing I didn't go forward with my original plan," he said mostly to Minerva but loud enough for everyone to hear.

"And what plan was that?" Minerva asked having come down from her moment of glee.

"Snog you senseless and grope you up," Harry chuckled. "A good shag might have been in order but I really thought that would be pushing it in present company."

"Please don't tell me you've shagged Professor McGonagall," James begged.

"Okay Dad, I won't," Harry replied. "Minerva has been the concubine of Lord Potter since she was fifteen, right?"

Minerva nodded. "Since 1943."

"You knew about this Dad?" James asked in shock.

"Minnie's lived at the estate most of her life, son. I knew about her from the start. She was Dad's second concubine. His first, Nellie raised me and my sisters. Nellie was killed during a German air raid on London in '41 when I was off flying for the R.A.F."

"And you Mum?"

"Minnie's been a friend of mine from the start," Samantha said. "It was not long after Charles got home from the War that I asked Charlus to allow him permissions to her."

"What?" James asked. He knew what permissions were. "You shagged her too? And you knew about it, Mum?"

"Hypocrite!" Lily huffed.

"What?"

"Before our Seventh Year, you were shagging Mallory a couple of times a week at least as I recall."

"Er," James looked guilty. "Still, I can't believe you asked Granddad that, Mum."

"It was very hard for Charles and me to conceive a child, James. We needed a fall back option and Minnie was it. I felt that if we needed her to bear the next generation of Potters, Charles should at least feel comfortable with her. It almost came down to that, James. Had I not gotten pregnant with you when I did, Minnie would have become Charles concubine and been the mother of the next Lord Potter. She was only twenty-nine at that time whereas I was over forty. When Charlus died, Minnie did become Charles' concubine. But she was fifty at the time and ..."

“My only regret, son, is that Minnie never had a child of her own,” Charles said. “I think she would have been a wonderful mother and I believe she deserved that opportunity.”

“So, she’s been your concubine since Dad died?” James asked.

“Dad,” Harry rolled his eyes, “until I either came of age or was emancipated, I could not come into my inheritance. Minnie is bound to Lord Potter and is the concubine of Lord Potter under Granddad’s will. Sirius emancipated me effective the day he died, which was two weeks ago. It was then that I became Lord Potter and Lord Black, even though it was over a week later that I learned of it. When I came into my inheritance, I came into Minerva as well.”

“OH! That’s awful!” Lily groaned.

James was laughing. “I see Sirius taught you well!”

“What?” Harry asked confused.

“That was a terrible pun,” Lily said.

“...came into Minerva as well,” James quoted laughing as well.

Harry now got it and groaned as well. “That’s not what I meant!”

“You clearly spent too much time with Padfoot,” James said. “And it might not be what you meant, but it is kind of what happened right? You have bonded with Minerva? That means you two have shagged?”

“It goes with the territory,” Harry shrugged trying to downplay it.

“I do not consider what Harry does to me shagging,” Minerva added in protest. “I think I speak for all of us when I say he knows how to please a woman and likes to please them...”

“Over and over and over again,” Astoria giggled.

Lily looked shocked. "All of them?"

Harry nodded with a smile on his face.

"Damn!" James said in awe.

"And all of them have or will have permission to have my children," Harry added.

"Even Minnie?" Samantha asked.

Harry nodded. "I gave her permission the day we bonded."

"But surely she's too old for children," Samantha protested.

"Not necessarily," Hermione cut in. "According to a couple of sources, in theory at least, Minerva is quite capable of having a child."

"How?" Lily asked in disbelief.

"A woman is born with all the eggs she will ever have. When she becomes sexually mature, she releases one or two fully developed eggs each month or so. If the eggs are not fertilized at the right time, she menstruates and the process repeats itself. She will continue to be fertile and capable of having a child as long as she is healthy and continues to produce healthy and viable eggs each month. Once she runs out of the eggs she was born with, she enters menopause and is no longer fertile.

"According to a couple of texts I've read on the subject, the magic in the concubine bond places her reproductive system in magical stasis. It is, in effect, frozen in time - unless she is menstruating at the time of the bonding, in which case the field forms when that is over. When her Maser gives her permission to have a child, the rite that is performed breaks the stasis field, and her cycle resumes where it had left off. While the rest of her is sixty-eight, Minerva's reproductive system has been in stasis since she was fifteen. In theory and from a

reproductive standpoint, she's as fertile as she was when she was fifteen."

"I'm sorry Minnie," Charles said. "If I had known there was even a small possibility..."

"It's alright, Charles," Minerva said softly. "We never thought to look it up. Hermione is the best student I've ever had and devours libraries. When she wants to learn about something, she wants to learn all about it. Consequently, when she learned about her bond with Harry and that Harry had inherited concubines ... Well, let's just say she might well be the foremost expert on the subject in Britain by now."

"Hermione is at the top of her class, if you must know. And, whether by accident or divine purpose, Harry is bonded to very smart women. I, as you may well recall, was at the top of my Hogwarts class. Mallory finished third, Dora was seventh - only because she was a trouble maker that would have given you a run for your money, James. Daphne is second in her class behind Hermione and Astoria is giving Hermione a run for her money. She's first in her year and may well be able to take her O.W.L.s early."

"Really?" Astoria said in surprise.

"If you remained at Hogwarts, you would not. But as that will not be the case, when we begin tutoring later this summer, it will be at your own pace. I would not be at all surprised if you sit for your O.W.L.s next spring."

"Oh goodie!" Astoria squealed.

"And Harry?" Lily asked.

"Alas, he's been around the middle of his year," Minerva said. "It's not that he isn't smart, it's just..."

"The Dursleys never let me learn and it took a while to learn how again," Harry shrugged.



“There are other factors, Harry,” Minerva said. “You’ve always been near the top of the class on your written transfiguration end of year exams. You’ve had problems with the practical and that always puzzled me given that you are very good at other spell work.” Minerva turned to Lily. “Harry’s at the top of the entire school in Defense Against the Dark Arts and can probably take his N.E.W.T.s this year in that subject. He’s also very good in Charms, Herbology and Care of Magical Creatures. He may not think so, given his professor in the subject, but he has a talent for potions.”

“My grades in that class are horrible!” Harry protested.

“You have received among the best end of year exam results in that class in each of your first three years, Harry. Because of the Tri-Wizard Tournament, you did not sit for those exams Fourth Year. But I would not be surprised if you got an Outstanding on your Potions O.W.L.”

“Wow!” Harry said, genuinely surprised.

“So what about transfiguration?” Lily asked.

“I was puzzled by that until recently. When Harry came to the Manor, we learned his magical core had been bound.”

“But they’re supposed to remove bindings before a student starts school,” Lily protested.

“Indeed,” McGonagall said. “And one of the reasons is because a binding can interfere with a student’s ability to perform transfiguration. Harry’s undergoing treatment to remove the binding and ... well, we’ve also learned he is a metamorphagus.”

“Really?”

Minerva nodded. “As you may know, that talent lends itself to transfiguration. Were his core not bound, he probably would be giving Hermione a run for her money in that class.”

“Who would do such a thing?”

“Dumbledore,” Charles growled. “That bastard.”

“Why would Dumbledore do that?” Astoria asked.

“We’ll explain,” Harry said. “Hermione? Dora?”

“Yes Harry?”

“This afternoon, I want you to bring Astoria and Daphne up to speed on everything that has happened. Okay?”

The two women nodded.

“Thank you, Minerva. I’d like to introduce the others.”

Minerva smiled, kissed Harry and returned to her seat.

“Mallory?” Harry asked. Mallory got up, walked over to Harry and kissed him for a while. When they broke, he turned to his ancestors. “I take it you all know Mallory as well?”

“Yes,” Samantha said. “It’s good to see you again, Mallory. We missed you.”

“You were a Healer, right?” James asked.

“And a Doctor,” Mallory added.

“What?” Harry asked in surprise.

“I’m sorry Harry, but it hadn’t really come up and I’m not currently practicing non-magical medicine. Those years I spent in the States? I went to Duke University and eventually got my medical degree. I completed my residency and received my Board Certifications in obstetrics and gynecology about a year before I came back.

“I came back shortly before Sirius escaped. I wanted to open a combined practice like they have in the States for Muggle Borns and their families but the Ministry was dead set against it and...”

“That’s why you want to open your clinic,” Harry realized.

Mallory nodded. “I don’t know if anyone told you this, Harry, but your Estate is legally outside of the Ministry’s jurisdiction.”

“It has been for centuries and even more so since World War II,” Charles added. “Bloody useful at times. That and the wards were the reasons why I thought Dumbledore was daft to suggest my son and daughter-in-law go into hiding somewhere else.”

“So if she wanted to open her clinic?” Harry asked.

“She’d need NHS approval, but...”

“NHS?”

“The Muggle National Health Service, Harry. They regulate the medical profession in Muggle Britain. I would be paid by them to treat people.”

“Wow,” Harry said.

“So, I take it you inherited her from Sirius?” Charles asked.

Harry nodded. “She was Sirius’s wife in all but law, and she is my wife in all but law as well. She’s now Mallory Black.”

“And I take it she has permission to have your children?” Lily asked, clearly not thrilled with the idea.

“Sirius and she tried but for some reason Sirius could not become a father. Mallory and he know it was his problem. In his letters to me, he asked me to give her the children he could not.”

“And how old are you,” Lily asked.

“Thirty-Nine,” Mallory said. “Although under Hermione’s theory, from a reproduction standpoint I am probably in my mid to late twenties.”

“And I take it you’ve had sex with her as well,” Lily said with clear hostility in her voice. Mallory pulled Harry into a hug and Harry could tell she was crying.

Hermione was on her feet in a flash, walked past Harry and Mallory and was glaring at Lily.

“What is your problem?” she shouted.

“You can’t tell me you approve of this,” Lily began.

“Approve of what? That the Wizarding World condones slavery? No! I’m a Muggle Born just like you. I don’t approve of the system. I believe it is misogynistic and denigrates women! But it is the system. Had Harry not taken me as his Consort I was set to be sold at Auction! Unlike you, I did not know that at the time. Do you think any of these women wanted this? Do you think any of them woke up one day and decided they wanted to grow up to be a concubine? None of them are in this situation by choice. Just what the bloody hell would you have Harry do?”

“He could have freed them!”

“And then what? Their status would become public knowledge. Minerva would lose her job! Mallory would never be allowed to work as a Healer again - but at least she’s a Doctor! Dora’s an Auror! People know what concubines are and what they may be used for! She’d be lucky to avoid prison given what she’s done for House Black and now House Potter. Daphne and Astoria would be viewed as little more than whores and in all probability that’s what they’d become! Add to it the fact that the bond is permanent. If cast loose, the witch might well lose her magic.

“Harry took these women in and I for one am proud of him for doing so! Mallory wants to open her own clinic. That is going to happen because Harry is going to see that it does! If Minerva wanted to open her own school, Harry would see it done for her. If Daphne or Astoria wants to become Minister for Magic one day, or anything, Harry is going to help them. If they want their own children, Harry will let them! These women - my sisters - have more opportunities now as part of Harry's Harem than they could probably have under any other conceivable circumstances in our world!

“These women are not sluts or whores! They are smart, beautiful, kind, caring, honest women who each deserve only the best! And they have it now! These women are allowed to speak their minds. The second bonding - the love bonding that allowed each of them to be his wife in all but law means that they are free to feel! They all care for him and it's not because they are his concubines! They all can refuse to have sex with him.

“Do you know how many of them have ever refused? None. Aside from the initial bonding rite, do you know how many times Harry has ordered any of them to have sex? Not once! And yet, since each of these women bonded with them he does have sex with each of them every day - usually more than once. They have sex with him; they sleep with him because they want to!

“I know it has only been a few days, but I can tell you he makes each and every one of us feel special! He makes us each feel beautiful, sexy and loved! Each of us feels like we are the only woman in the world when we are with him and it doesn't matter if we are actually alone with him or if the others are there as well! He sees to our needs before his own - and he has never once failed to see to our needs!”

“Still...” Lily said, but she was clearly retreating.

“And for the time being, there is little for Harry to do. Until his magic is unbound he cannot use magic, cannot practice or train. Once it's unbound, we all will be very busy. But until then? It's not like there's a

telly to provide distraction. Add in Harry's metamorphagus abilities and..."

"Why does that matter?"

"He recovers very quickly. The day I became his consort we made love ten times! That was a slow day for Harry, although it wore me out. Not that I minded. Harry?"

"Yes dear?"

"How many times did you have sex yesterday?"

"Including oral?"

Hermione nodded. She could see Harry struggling and counting on his fingers.

"Let's see... Mallory, Dora and Minnie: three times each. Hermione four times and Daphne and Astoria six times each - twenty-five times."

"Bloody hell!" James exclaimed.

"Bit more than normal," Harry went on. "Fourteen's about average."

"It's a wonder it didn't fall off," James said in awe.

"I was a little knackered, although had Astoria or Daphne wanted another romp, I might have managed it."

"Harry now has six women in his life who care about him or are coming to care about him very much. We all want to be happy and for him to be happy - and now I am not talking about the sex. We are his family. Until last Sunday, he had no memory of that. The Dursleys saw to it he had no notion of family, love, intimacy. He has all of that now and I feel blessed to be part of it and if anyone wants to hurt him or my sisters, they have to go through me first!"

“Sorry,” Lily said meekly.

“Thank you Hermione,” Mallory said.

“You’re welcome,” she replied.

Harry released his hold on Mallory and she sat down. “Dora?” Harry asked. Dora walked over to Harry and kissed him eagerly. “This is Dora Tonks,” Harry said. “She was also one of Sirius’s. She’s a fully qualified Auror and is currently on leave from the Auror Corps.”

“Actually, I was mostly with Remus,” Dora said. “Sirius was still in prison and it was Remus who bonded me.”

“How?” Lily asked. “I thought he withdrew permissions?”

“To Mallory,” Dora replied. “She and I were both his thirteenth Birthday present, although that was a few months before I was born. Sirius told Remus that he had the paper on me before it all happened, but he didn’t know who I was at the time. Although I did bond with him eventually, after Harry saved him, I was still mostly with Remus.”

“Why?”

“I think Sirius had issues with sleeping with his first cousin.”

“First Cousin?”

“My Mum is Andromeda Tonks - formerly Andromeda Black.”

“Which make her my third cousin,” Harry said. “Third cousins are not that big an issue.”

“And you are also trying to have a child?” Lily asked.

“Not yet. When I resign from the Aurors I’ll ask him, which will probably be later this summer.”

“What?” Harry said in genuine surprise.

“You need me more than they do, Harry,” Dora said, “and I am not talking about the sex. Who else can help you develop your metamorph skills? That and I can help teach you and the others what I know. Your training and education is what’s important, Harry.”

“Metamorph skills?” Charles asked. Before their eyes, Dora changed into the spitting image of Harry, except she was not wearing glasses and the Dora/Harry looked ridiculous in her skirt and blouse. As the whole room laughed, she changed back.

“Thought you said you couldn’t do that?” Harry said softly.

“After yesterday, maybe I can.”

“Yesterday?” Lily asked.

“The love bonding was yesterday,” Dora said. “After Harry bound Daphne and Astoria, we all took the love bond.”

“So you’re now really Dora Black?”

Dora nodded.

“Dora was the first concubine I bonded with,” Harry said. “She’s also the reason why I cannot say I’ve ever had sex with a woman in private.”

“That’s not true, Harry,” Hermione protested. “She left us alone the night we bonded!”

“Yeah, but she walked in on us during the bonding, and a couple times the next day before I bonded with her...”

“I’m not sure I could do that,” James said.



Harry shrugged. "Since bonding with Dora, I always sleep with two witches. There are always at least two witches at any of the bonding rites aside from the witch I was bonding with. Unless someone else is in the house, I don't see a point of being private about it. And I haven't had any complaints."

"It's actually kind of fun," Dora said. She then kissed his cheek and returned to her seat.

Daphne and Astoria both came up to Harry and both kissed him.

"This is Daphne and Astoria Greengrass, although now it's Daphne Black and Astoria Potter," Harry said. "We bonded yesterday." Harry then described how they came to be Potter Girls.

"You gave them 50,000?" Lily asked.

Harry nodded. "I wanted them to be safe and to ensure that this would never happen to their family again. One day, soon I hope, I'll bring them to live at the Estate so they can be with their daughters."

"Probably won't be at the Manor," Astoria said, "but Harry promised Daddy and us that he would not break up the family."

Lily nodded thoughtfully. "How old are you two?"

"I'm sixteen," Daphne said. "I'm in the same year as Harry and Hermione."

"I'm two years behind them," Astoria added. "I'm fourteen."

"So young," Lily said softly. "And the bonding? Were you virgins?"

The two girls nodded.

"Must have been terrifying!"

“It could have been,” Daphne said. “I won’t say that arriving and learning we had been sold as concubines was not. It was. But we arrived and Harry and Hermione spent several hours talking with us about why this has happened and what they will do for us and such and...”

“It was still a little scary,” Astoria said. “But Harry made it easy for us really. Even before the bonding really began, he helped us relax. He had sex with Minerva, which I think he did so we would see it wasn’t like the Slytherin Common Room.”

“Slytherin?” James shot out.

“No all of us are Death Eater’s in the making,” Daphne said. She then described what it was like to be a witch in Slytherin House. Lily looked like she was going to be sick.

“Still, it must have been horrible,” Lily said, “bonding that is.”

“By the time Harry stood up to bind us, I wanted it to happen,” Astoria said. “I really did.”

“Me too,” Daphne agreed. “And it was wonderful!”

“It did hurt a bit,” Astoria said, “but it was magical! I felt like the world and all its problems were gone and it was only me and Harry and my new sisters. I felt - I felt loved. I feel loved.”

“It was special,” Daphne agreed. “True, not the same as a wedding, but...”

“Don’t think there won’t be one,” Hermione said. “You’re his wife in all but law, which means you can have a wedding and if Harry here does not give you one...”

“Fine!” Harry shot back. “Weddings all around one day.”

Lily actually laughed.

“And the love bond?” Samantha asked.

“I was the first to take the love bonding,” Daphne said. “I did it after we bonded and without anyone suggesting it. Astoria was next and the others followed. I want to be Harry’s for the rest of my life, and that’s not the concubine bond talking. Since it happened, I’ve thought about it and this is what I want. With Harry, I can be whatever I want to be and my talents allow. The same is true for my sister.”

“Children?”

“I’m going to get settled in first,” Daphne said. “A couple of weeks, a month at the most and I’ll ask.”

“And you Astoria?”

“I want them too. Not yet. Year or two at least. Harry wants me to finish my O.W.L.s first and I can accept that. I’m not really ready yet.”

“So you are happy?”

“We’ve only been here a day, Ma’am,” Daphne replied. “But I think I can be.”

“Me too,” Astoria added.

“I never thought I’d say this Harry,” Lily said. “But I can see it on all of their faces. I think you are doing the right thing by all of them.”

“Thanks,” Harry said.

“And Clarice?”

“We think we are close to finding her,” Dora said, “but time is running out.”

“What do you mean?”

“Dumbledore’s selling her off as a concubine at the annual action in about two weeks.”

“That bastard!” James said.

“We think he wants to eliminate the Potter line,” Dora added. “If we find her before then, Harry will place her under the House Protection.”

“And if you can’t?”

“I’ll buy her, if necessary,” Harry said seriously.

“That’s incest!” Lily cried.

“Only if he bonds with her,” Hermione said. “At the Auction, all he really buys is the rights to her. Because she is his sister, he can choose to not bond with her at all.”

“Then why did he bond with Daphne and Astoria?”

“He had to,” Daphne said. “My Dad took an Unbreakable Vow. Lord Black had to bind us as Concubines or he, our Mum and younger sisters would die.”

Lily nodded. “And Clarice?”

“If I buy her, she will be then summoned and placed under House Protection,” Harry said.

“That will work,” James offered. Lily nodded in reply.

“It’s only a pity I can’t really make use of that House Protection thing,” Harry sighed.

The others looked at him,

“For Clarice, because she is family, it works. Had Daphne and Astoria’s Dad not made that vow, I could have used it because his House is allied with House Black. If need be, I will use it for their sisters. But I cannot use it without the family or clan ties. It won’t work against the Concubine Contract across the board.”

“Why are you worried about this,” Lily asked.

“A lot of our friends are on this year’s auction block as concubines,” Hermione said. “I’ve asked Harry to save them.”

“Course it means they’ll still be concubines,” Harry said.

“But they’ll be Harry Girls,” Astoria said. “You know what that means, right?”

Everyone looked at Astoria in surprise.

“What does that mean?” Lily asked.

“They will all have what we have,” Astoria said. “A knight in shining armor - or at least one with messy black hair and dreamy green eyes - who will give them the possibility of a true happily ever after.”

“You think that?” Lily asked.

“It’s what he gave Daphne and me. We faced the horror and found what looks like heaven.”

Harry then noted it was nearing lunch time and reminded Mallory she had a shift at the hospital beginning at one and Minerva she had two new Muggle Born families to visit that afternoon. Mallory and Minerva would share his bed that night, and with that he bade his ancestors a good day, promised to keep them updated and Harry and his Harem left the Pensieve.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16; CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68; CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14; CONCUBINE (POTTER).

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: CLARICE

SATURDAY JUNE 29, 1996 - Potter Estate.

Harry and the others left the Pensieve. Mallory and Minerva were clearly a little shaken as they had truly seen the dead risen from the grave. But they were able to tell Harry that the visions were in fact accurate. Harry was pleased, for even though this meeting with his Mum was difficult, he did like seeing his ancestors. He had Dora as a before lunch appetizer, and she certainly was a witch who could work up an appetite. When lunch had ended, he kissed Minerva and Mallory as they had their outside jobs to attend to before Hermione gave him a lesson in what he could do to her in her condition - a lesson she made sure was seen by the remaining three witches.

Harry needed to get out. Given that his estate was almost the size of London itself, there was plenty of room for him to move about. He had been here a week and as wonderful as that week was, he had been itching to get out and see what there was to see. Minerva had retrieved his Firebolt from Hogwarts not long after she had become his concubine, so he had a means to travel about his lands. He invited Hermione to join him. But she made it clear the only broom she wanted to fly was in his pants and she was in no condition to fly on it today. As for the flying stick with twigs? No thanks! Harry knew Hermione had issues with magical flying. Something he'd have to work on, he thought.

Daphne and Astoria wanted to go and even had their own brooms up in their trunks somewhere, but Harry begged off.

"Tomorrow, Ladies," he said. "I want to see what's worth seeing and tomorrow we'll see the lot, okay?"

They seemed a little disappointed, but Harry wanted Dora and Hermione to fill them in on things. He promised them a trip soon. Harry then led them out onto the veranda. He kissed each and promised to be home by supper time, then straddled his broom and kicked off, waving to them as he flew off.

“Well,” Dora said, “I don’t know about you girls, but the air is warm, sun is shining, I’m going to work on a proper tan.” She took off her robe and stood naked before them. Bending over, she removed her wand and seemed to cast a spell on herself before settling into an adjustable lounging chair. The two blondes did likewise after asking Dora about the spell she used. Hermione soon followed suit. She used tampons as did most witches her age. This had to do with the fact that even though she was having her period, she still had to reach her climax at least once a day. A pad would have made that difficult.

The four witches spent the afternoon lounging in the sun and not getting burnt thanks to the spell Dora taught them. Hermione had to admit to herself that it was quite relaxing, feeling the sun all over her. All that was missing was a Harry massage. Later, when she thought about it, Dora’s idea of nude sunbathing made sense. It was a proper counterpoint to the serious discussion about the threats to Harry as Dora and Hermione told their new friends everything.

The Greengrass girls seemed unsurprised by the fact that Voldemort had it in for Harry. That was common knowledge. It was the details they heard for the first time that got to them: the Prophecy, how Harry’s parents had been lured away from the safest place in Britain, the betrayal, Harry’s childhood, and his more recent encounters.

That Albus Dumbledore was really a right bastard also came as little surprise. The Greengrass family had little respect for the man. Slytherin had once been respected. When Dumbledore joined the faculty in 1919, it began going downhill. It had once been the model house. It was the standard and, while it was mainly Purebloods, they had not looked down on others like now, rather tried to hold themselves out as examples to the other houses of what it was to be magical. The Pureblood bigotry probably existed even then, but it had been suppressed.

In comes Dumbledore and Slytherin became bigoted. Dumbledore had been a Gryffindor when he was in school, but the rumors were he encouraged Purebloods in general and Slytherins in particular to view themselves as superior to all others. The raping of Slytherin girls began under his tenure as Headmaster. The story was that he not



only looked the other way, he even obliviated the girls or their parents who insisted upon filing charges. This had led to the situation today where a girl in that House could only avoid being a House whore if she was too ugly to shag, betrothed or married. Snape had only made things worse, since once you gave it up in Slytherin; he expected time with you as well. Again, Dumbledore knew this and did nothing.

When the conversation moved onto Dumbledore's plots against Harry, there was a real change in the demeanor of the two sisters. The two blondes were soon up, pacing back and forth as each revelation was told. They told the girls about the fact that Dumbledore wanted Harry dead, wanted his money, his votes on the Wizengamot, and wanted the glory for ending Voldemort, all to achieve what Voldemort was after in the first place.

"How could anyone do this to Harry," Astoria cried. "Why would anyone? Don't they know just how truly special he is?"

"Yesterday began as the worst day of my life. My Daddy sold me and Daphne to Lord Black and we knew that meant Malfoy and that we would be little more than whores for him and his Death Eater friends. I was terrified when I arrived here. It was a bloody miracle I didn't pee my self.

"Then we were brought to you and him. Harry talked to us and explained why this all was happening. He didn't want this for us any more than we did, but he did it because it was necessary. He wanted to save us and our whole family as well. This was not some perv wanting a little whore for his pleasure - which is what most concubine owners are - this was a selfless act on his part. He saved our lives and ... and is giving us a future. You've known Harry. I'm sure you know how truly special he is.

"I am Harry's girl! I may have been even before he first kissed me. I believe he is the future and that is a future I want for me, my sister Daphne, my children - one day - and my other sisters. In this future, the Purebloods lose and a new world arises. In this future, no girl should fear becoming a concubine or being treated as property. But,

in this future, I want a choice for me. I want to choose whether or not to remain bound to Harry. I want that choice because I want to remain his forever. I know he will never love me the way he loves you, Hermione. But he has such a huge heart, don't you know. While he may be huge in other ways, it's his heart. I feel I have a tiny piece of it and a tiny piece of our Harry is more than most women can expect. I FEEL LOVED! I FEEL SAFE! And I know it's not just me. I see it in Daphne's face, and Dora and Mallory and Minnie. I know it's in your's Hermione. I love Harry Potter - the real one! I want to learn all I can to help him. I want to do all I can to help him!"

Daphne nodded. "He was the only boy who was ever nice to me. First Year, Ron started picking on me when I was alone because I was a Slytherin and Harry stopped him. Harry stopped Malfoy once as well. Had I not been in Slytherin, I know I would have been his friend before now. I would have joined your Army last year. I wanted to, but..."

Daphne was tearing up.

"It's okay," Hermione said softly.

"If I could have been his Consort, Hermione, I would have. I just want you to know that. If I am given the choice, I will stay with Harry. I will be his forever. I've decided. Next time I am with him, I will ask for children. He deserves all I can be and all I can give him and more.

"I have an idea about how we can deal with the threats against him, but I need time to mull it over."

"What kind of idea?" Dora asked.

"A very Slytherin kind," Daphne smirked.

"Which is probably what we need now," Hermione said. "Charging in might not work too well right now."

Harry's first discovery stunned him. There was a large building hidden from the Manor in a wood a couple hundred yards away or so. He

landed to see what it was and soon learned he now had a way - several ways, in fact - to take Hermione and the others out and about on the Estate without resorting to magical flying. Hermione hated all forms of magical flight. Harry conversely was not comfortable with most other forms of magical transportation. What he found was something he knew Hermione would be comfortable with, although he was a little surprised by it. He decided immediately that he would take Hermione and the others on a tour of the Estate tomorrow.

Harry was flying south, towards one of the side boundaries of the property. After passing over what he thought had to be at least the length of three Quidditch pitches, maybe more, the woods gave way to fields and pastures. He continued south, admiring the countryside and watching for a west leading road he had been told about that morning that would lead him to Pottersport and his first view of the sea. He was really looking forward to that.

After what he judged was about four miles, he found the road. He was surprised to see that it was paved and looked like a Muggle road. He had been told by Darda the Elf that he would sense the wards long before he crossed them, yet he sensed nothing. Surely he was off the estate. But this was the only such road or even path he had flown over so he turned to the right to follow it to the west and the sea. The countryside was rolling hills, although not too steep for the most part as much of the land was tilled earth. It was so green, Harry thought. The road wound back and forth, seeming to follow the contours of the land. Harry was convinced he was too far to the south as he overtook a couple of Lorries heading west. Still, this might be the only way to find his way back and something had to be up ahead.

The crops had changed, Harry noted as he flew on. Gone were the pastures and plowed fields and in their place were row after row of what looked like vine covered fences. Vines? Harry thought. Vineyard? Grapes? Surely...?

He crested a ridge and followed the road down into a valley. When the road reached the bottom it turned sharply to the right and Harry followed. As soon as he turned, he saw a town barely half a mile in front of him. Even from this distance, he could see this town was at least twice the size of Hogsmeade, which Hermione had once told

him was the largest magical village in the British Isles. Surely he was off the Estate. Too late for it now, he thought. He had flown over three Muggle vehicles and would be in for it with the Ministry.

The road ran along the base of the ridge, more of those vine things along the slope until one reached the town proper. Harry slowed up and flew lower. On the right side of the road he soon saw a few houses and then shops. The left side, along the valley floor, was where most of the town was located. To the right, however, there was a short row of shops and a building on the crest of the ridge that he soon saw was accessed by a wooden stair from the valley below and the car park? He saw several cars parked in a row just off the main road.

Just before he reached the town, he saw a sign. "Potter's Vineyard," it said. Now he was confused. The town he had heard about and knew it was within the Estate, but cars? True, Mr. Weasley had one once and he knew the Ministry had them. But most Wizards and Witches did not. Odd. Moreover, upon the roof of the building on the ridge was a large sign proclaiming for all to see approaching from either direction: "Martha's Restaurant."

Harry landed at the edge of the car park beside one of the shops on the ridge side of the main road and just by the stairs leading up to "Martha's." Just outside the shop, four older gentlemen were seated on a bench for no apparent reason. The two in the middle looked like they might be playing a game of chess, while another read a newspaper than the one closest to Harry smoked a pipe and seemed to be watching the day go by. To Harry's surprise, right beside the bench was a rack that held several flying brooms of various makes and models. Obviously this was a magical town despite the cars and if it was, Hermione would have to rethink the accuracy of *Hogwarts: A History*, which had told her Hogsmeade was the largest magical community in Britain. This village was much larger.

Harry began to stack his Firebolt in the rack.

"Wouldn't do that if that were my broom, Lad," the man smoking the pipe said.

“Excuse me, Sir?” Harry asked.

“While I doubt anyone would actually steal it, fair bet a nice broom like that might get borrowed for a bit.”

Harry looked at the man cautiously.

He laughed at Harry. “Not by me, Lad. Bit too old for a fast broom such as that one. There are younger one’s about though who might fancy a flight. You headed up to Martha’s.”

“Er, I suppose.”

“So long as you don’t terrorize the guests, I’m sure she won’t have a problem with the broom. Don’t recall seeing you around.”

“Er - been away. School, Sir.”

“Suppose that must be it then. Amazing how the boardies grow and change over a year’s time.”

“Boardies?”

“Boarding school, Lad.”

“Oh. Yeah. Sprouted a bit, Sir.”

“Must be it then. Enjoy your lunch.”

“Thank you Sir.”

“Least they bloody well teach manners at whatever school it is you attend. Some of the local lads could learn to do that.”

“Thanks.”

Harry was standing five feet from the man. The two chess players were looking at him at well. They didn’t seem to recognize him, or if

they did they were so unlike anyone he had bet before since he learned he was a wizard. No shouts of "It's him! It's Harry Potter!" No pleading for his autograph or picture or anything. To them, he was just another teenager and the only way he had stood out was by being polite, not by being the Boy-Who-Lived. This was a pleasant surprise to say the least.

Harry placed his broom on his shoulder and began climbing the stairs to Martha's which looked to be a good four stories above the rest of the town. As he climbed, he noticed a family descending towards him: a mother, father and three young children. The girl might be eleven, the boys were even younger.

"Oooh! Daddy!" one of the boys said as they were almost passing each other. "That's a Firebolt that is!" The boy stared at Harry in awe. "You play Quidditch?" he asked.

"I'm sure this young man has better things to do than show off his broom," the Mother said.

"It's okay," Harry said. "It is a Firebolt and I do play."

"Wow!"

"What team?" the other boy said. "No one in the local league has one. You must play for Puddlemere or some such."

"Sorry, no. School team."

"What school flies Firebolts?"

"Er - just me, I think."

"Must be rich."

"Actually, this was a gift from my godfather."

"Well, he must be then."

Harry shrugged. "Might have been. Then again, most people thought he was a fool with what money he did have."

"Well, still. Is it fast?"

"Yep."

"Cool! Wish I had a godfather like that!"

"Andy!" the boy's mother exclaimed. "Your godfather loves you very much."

"Never bought me a Firebolt."

"Nor will he ever, you keep that attitude. Besides, you are far too young for anything more than a training broom!"

"I suppose," the boy moped.

"And how is your godfather - er ..."

"Dead," Harry said, hoping she did not figure out who he was.

"I'm so sorry. When?"

"Couple weeks ago."

"He's Outside, wasn't he?"

"He lived in London," Harry said hoping outside meant outside the estate.

"That explains is then," the woman said. "Sorry."

"Thanks."

The family began back down the stairs and Harry continued up. Odd that, he thought. Again, he was just another boy to them. He finally reached the doors to Martha's and entered. It was indeed a restaurant, although there seemed to be few customers at all. A short and plump lady with graying hair approached him.

"Welcome young man," she said in a pleasant voice. "You're first time?"

Harry nodded.

"Though so. I remember all my customers. You do remind me of someone - but that's impossible. Anyway, all the tables on the deck are full - I'm sorry - weather's nice and it being a Saturday and all. But we can seat you in here, if you like."

"That's okay, I was just looking around."

"Up from Pottersport then?"

"No Ma'am."

"Charlestown?"

"No, sorry."

"Well, you're definitely not from here. You an Outsider?"

"No Ma'am. I live here at the Estate. Just got back from school and..."

"Well aside from the towns, the only other wizard I know who lives here is that Mr. Lupin chap. Last I recall, he has no son. A relative?"

"No Ma'am."

"Then where do you live?"



“Er...”

The woman seemed to pale a little. “You - you wouldn’t be James and Lily’s Harry, would you?”

Not Harry Potter? Harry thought. Here I’m James and Lily’s Harry! That’s so much nicer.

Harry smiled.

“You are, aren’t you?”

Harry nodded shyly.

“Oh Thank Merlin you’re okay,” she surprised Harry by hugging him tight. “Sorry. Where are my manners! I shouldn’t have done that seeing as you and I have never met. I’m Martha Clark. My husband and I own this place. And ... oh Bless Me,” she said staring at Harry’s hand as he offered to shake hers, “you have the Ring!”

Harry nodded.

“Are you up at the Manor?”

Harry nodded again.

“It is indeed a pleasure having Lord Potter in the House again,” Martha said somewhat formally. But she still had a pleasant smile on her face.

“Please, just Harry is fine Martha,” Harry said.

“So like Lord Charles. He hated his title too. His only - er - show off stuff was his cars. Otherwise, you could find him at the pubs with the rest of the blokes. He even worked the boats as a deck hand in his youth. I’m told he was Estate darts champion years running and heaven forbid if anyone lost to him on purpose. He was actually quite good. We all have missed him and his Samantha.

“Oh my!”

“What?”

“Can you stay for a bit? Hungry?”

“I had lunch with my wife and ...”

“Wife? Wife and what?”

“Er...”

“Harry, you seem a bit young for a wife. But that’s none of my business. And if you were about to say ‘Concubine’, well Outside that carries a stigma but not here. Most of us have a Potter Concubine as an ancestor if we were born here. If not, then we are most likely married to a Concubine’s descendant. My own Great-great grandmum was one and my family is proud of that. You will find a lot of good here comes from what Outsiders look down upon as the lowest of classes. Our Library, Schools, Hospital, they were all founded by a Lord Potter’s Concubine and many a subsequent one worked there. My good friend Minnie taught primary school. She was Lord Charlus Potter’s. Taught there until she got a posting at Hogwarts. I haven’t seen her since not long after Lord Charles and Lady Sam died of Dragon Pox they caught at some function outside almost eight years ago.”

“Minnie? Minerva McGonagall?”

“You know her?”

“In more ways than one. She was my Head of House and Transfiguration Professor at Hogwarts and when I was emancipated and inherited my - er - estate, it seems I inherited her too.”

“Has she moved back?”

Harry nodded.

“When,” Martha said sounding disappointed.

“Few days ago.”

“And she hasn’t even stopped by for tea? I thought she was a friend!”

“Martha, I’m sure it’s not that. I came here knowing nothing about any of this and she’s been helping. That and as Deputy Headmistress, she also has to meet with all of the new Muggle Born families this time of year. But when I see her tonight I will tell her you feel most slighted by her omission.”

“Harry, a gentle reminder would be fine.”

“But not as much fun.”

Martha laughed. “I see there’s a bit of James in you two - aside from your face and hair that it. As a youth, that lad was a handful. But I would like to see my old friend again.”

“I was thinking of bringing my girls out tomorrow,” Harry said. “But I’m not sure Minerva will be able to make it. She said something about taking families to Diagon Alley...”

“Why anyone would shop in that crime ridden cesspool is beyond me,” Martha said in disgust. “High Street in Pottersport is so much nicer - and certainly far less lethal. You do know your Great-grandparents were murdered in Diagon Alley.”

“I recently learned that,” Harry nodded.

“Why anyone from this estate would venture into Wizarding Britain is beyond me. Place is full of nutters, wars, dark magic and nonsense. If only we had our own magic school! You know, just about everyone who left here to live there winds up suffering an unnatural death? Most of us don’t bother - or at least we don’t bother with Britain. The

Continent isn't too bad. Magical Britain though. They can rot for all we care! Smartest move Lord Richard made was to get out from under Ministry jurisdiction in 1217. We here are subjects of Her Majesty's government, not the Ministry for Magic and that backwards lot!

"Oh but can you stay for just a bit, Harry? I know you say you've eaten, but a spot of tea or juice?"

"Juice sounds nice, but why?"

"There's someone here you must meet! Oh, she will be thrilled!"

"Who?"

"Samantha Jones is here with her family. She's your Grandmother's niece and I guess that makes you her First Cousin once removed or some such..."

Harry met his Cousin Samantha and her family. He was sitting with them on the crowded deck overlooking what he was told was the "Wine Country." It was quite a view he had to admit and decided then and there his girls and he would eat breakfast here tomorrow. Sam, as she preferred to be called, was a very pleasant woman and her husband Roger was a nice man. They had two children - a son and daughter about his age - but those two did not say too much when he was introduced. Lord Potter seemed a bit much for them. What was really odd, though, was that for his first time since learning he was a wizard, he was not the famous Harry Potter. Most people either ignored him or treated him as just another teen. Had he not enjoyed being almost normal for once, it might have seemed unnerving.

Sam was able to explain to him things about the estate that the dry account books did not. Martha's was considered the best Restaurant on the estate. Almost everything on the menu came from the estate and it was all cooked "Muggle style." No magic was used - aside to keep the fires going. It was generally agreed that well prepared "hand made" food was better than "Magic" food on so many levels.

Harry learned that Potter's Vineyard was just that. The Winery was located here. The Estate produced some of the best Elf made wine in Europe and had won awards for years, much to the consternation of the French. But there was also the Dairy. The Dairy supplied milk and crème for the local market, but was the largest supplier of cheese and butter for Magical Britain.

Pottersport was the main town on the Estate. It was a fishing port and supplied almost all the fish and seafood consumed in Magical Britain, with a healthy export to the Continent as well. Basically, if one ate fish and chips or kippers in Magical Britain, it was a very good bet it came in from Pottersport. There was also a brewery that made premium ale sold mostly to Muggles and a distillery as well. Potter's Reserve was a very expensive and highly regarded Muggle style whiskey. It was also said that High Street was the best shopping district in Magical Britain; although Sam conceded as a resident she was biased. Pottersport was also the location of the power plant. The Potter Estate was electrified and oddly Harry should have known this as he had been turning on lights all week. It just never dawned on him.

The third town was Charlestown. It was newer and larger than Potter's Vineyard, but smaller than Pottersport. Their main business was farming. All the beef consumed in the Estate was packaged there and they were a major supplier of pork products, poultry and produce for export to wizarding Britain. From a food standpoint, the Estate was self-sufficient with a significant export. As the Estate made ten percent of the profits, Harry now understood why he was so damn wealthy. In return, all of the services were fully funded by the Estate including the schools, hospital, public works projects, parks, library and so forth.

What really shocked Harry was the status both of Lord Potter and his Estate. Lord Potter had holdings - fairly significant ones, including almost a third of Diagon Alley - in Magical Britain. These properties were held so he could maintain his seats in the Wizengamot. But his main estate was technically a Duchy. It was an independent magical country with its own Gringotts branch as proof. As Lord Potter, he was not unlike the Queen of England. The government of his people was elected; he was their Head of State. He had influence and

control over the land, but the laws and their enforcement fell to the Lord Mayor, Council and High Court.

Harry remembered the books he had gone over with Remus. He owned all the land and the major exporting companies on the estate. But the land was leased to his people for next to nothing. If he earned a galleon a year per person, it was a lot. He got ten percent of the export profits. He earned nothing from imports or anything sold local. Still, the exports were very lucrative. Throw in his substantial Outside portfolio and his income was mind boggling. In Muggle terms, he made over 100 Million Pounds in a bad a year after paying all Estate expenses and even the Muggle taxes - and that was just the Potter money.

As Harry flew west after his time in Potter's Vineyard, a thought dawned on him. He remembered a recommendation from his Gringott's account manager about diversifying his markets given the increasing uncertainty in Britain. The account manager's recommendation was aggressive and no doubt would be noticed with shortages in certain commodities in Wizing Britain if implemented. The potential profits caused by increased prices - ordinarily Harry did not want to profit from another's misfortune and it would be the average witch and wizard who would pay dearly if he cut supplies. Still...

On a smaller scale, he could get into the European markets. The diversification would go unnoticed but provide an open door to shift in part or in whole to that market if need be. Should the Purebloods gain control of Britain, Harry could break them economically by shifting the entire export from them to Europe. Food riots had led to the fall of more regimes than anything in history. Pull the Potter Estate exports and Wizing Britain would effectively lose at least one third of its food supply, if not more. It would cut across the entire society and the "new" government would be ripe for attack. Something to keep in mind, he thought.

Up ahead he saw a castle and this puzzled him as he followed what was the main road to Pottersport. It was large and imposing, and surrounded by what looked like large, almost star shaped earthworks atop which Harry saw what looked like very old fashioned cannons.

The castle seemed less impressive than the one he had considered home the last five years. It was not Hogwarts. Still, beyond it he saw a vast expanse of water. But where was Pottersport?

It seemed the castle was on a bluff. Not quite a cliff, but on the far side the ground dropped steeply to a flat plain that was on the coast. It was on that plain that he saw a huge town. If Potter's Vineyard was at least twice as large as Hogsmeade, Pottersport was ten times again as large. The main road snaked down the bluff and then ran right through the middle of the town to the sea. Harry could see the numerous shops lining the road and figured it had to be the High Street. He slowed and lowered until he gently touched down on a sidewalk. He walked through block after block of shops and was soon convinced that this indeed rivaled Diagon Alley if not exceeded it. The number and variety of shops amazed him and there were several he had never seen in Magical London as they clearly sold Muggle stuff. One shop in particular caught his attention and he entered.

An hour later, Harry left rather pleased with himself. He continued his stroll and soon reached the end of the road. Another road that ran along the coastline intersected with High Street. It was called Front Street and on the far side of the road was the sea. Harry crossed over and stood on a railing looking out over the water. Boats were anchored in the calm waters and to his right he saw docks filled with boats with cranes and nets that had to be fishing boats. Harry turned to look out on the waters again. He could see that there was no land on the far side. He had reached the sea at last. He was soon lost in his thoughts as he looked at the infinite space before his eyes.

"Excuse me, laddie," a deep voice said bringing Harry back from his thoughts, "but you look a little lost." It was a kind voice. Harry turned to see its owner. It was a tall and burly man who looked to be in his forties with reddish hair and a matching beard and mustache, both well groomed. He was dressed in a heavy, wool sweater which seemed to be a bit much for the weather. While he seemed to have a kind face, there was a look in his eyes. He was suspicious.

"Lost in thought," Harry said calmly. "I've never seen the sea before."

“That ain’t the sea,” the man said. “Just the harbor. Beyond it is the bay and beyond that is the sea.”

“Still, it’s quite pretty,” Harry admitted.

“Aye Lad, that it is. You’re not from around here, are you now?”

“Until I moved here a week ago, I didn’t even know this place existed.”

“Moved here? With your parents? I wasn’t aware of any newcomers. We don’t get many outlanders here at all, if’n you must know.”

“My parents are dead,” Harry said as calmly as he could. “They lived here a long time ago, before I was born then moved away.”

“Sorry, lad, I didn’t know.”

“It’s okay.”

“Lived here, did they? An’ moved away? Always said no good had ever come from moving away regardless of the reason. After what happened to James and Lily Potter, can’t imagine why anyone would.”

“Those were my parents,” Harry said softly.

The man’s eyes went wide with recognition. “You’re Harry Potter? Lord Potter? Milord, I apologize for...”

“Please, just Harry is fine with me.”

“Harry then. And I am Mick Jameson.”

Harry wondered where he heard that name before, but he was sure he had heard it - at least the last name.



The man chuckled. "Not unlike yer Granddad Lord Charles. 'Though you look more like James. Lord Charles weren't fer puttin' on airs neither."

"Thanks, Mr. Jameson."

"Mick's fine, Harry. So you're up at the Manor, I take it."

Harry nodded. "Been there a week. This was the first chance I had to come down here. What's that castle on the hill?"

"Potter Castle," Mick said. "The round house was built in the tenth century, but most of what you see was built in the fourteenth. It was the home of many a Lord Potter for centuries until they built the Manor."

"So it's empty?" Harry asked.

"Not really. It's our Government House. Previous Lord Potters still used it for special events, including dinners and balls for all who could attend. It is also used for weddings and receptions and the like. I take it you don't know much about the estate."

"Nor my family," Harry admitted. "Didn't know about any of this at all until recently."

"An' where was you livin' recently?"

"When I wasn't at Hogwarts, I lived with my Mum's sister's family in Surry."

"Well, welcome home, Lord Harry. Ah, it will be good having a Lord Potter in residence once again."

"What do you mean?"

“Don’t get me wrong, but this ain’t like them arseholes what live beyond our borders. Lord Potter has always been head of our family and the symbol of how every babe born here is family. All of us what were born here can trace our family back to a Lord Potter somewhere in the distant path. I me-self is descended from the twenty-third Lord and his Concubine. An’ here there ain’t no shame in that, unlike over the borders. Potter Concubines have always been as respected here as Potter Ladies an’ their children is as much a Potter as any born to a Lady.”

“Thanks,” Harry said. “What do you do, Mick? If you don’t mind me asking.”

“I’m the owner and skipper of the Maggie Marie.” He then pointed to a large boat - a ship really, moored down the way, “named fer the missus. We just got back las’ night after six weeks fishing off the Grand Banks. Been unloadin’ our catch ‘til jus’ about now.”

“Good catch?”

“Very good one. Should do more than pay the bills, it should. Me crew and I was going to grab a pint or two at the Sail Loft Pub up yonder before goin’ home to the wife and kiddies. Care to join us?”

“I’m not yet sixteen,” Harry said. “Too young for a pint.”

“No worries. If’n it ain’t a pint, they’s got soda as well. Tea, if you’re into that. Come along and meet some o’ yer relations.”

Harry picked up his broom and followed the man to the Pub. Harry had been to a few pubs or taverns in the Wizarding World. None were like this one. Compared to this one, they were old, run down. While this Pub did not look modern, it did look like it was built within the last century and certainly looked well maintained and clean - something he could not say about any of the others.

“Hey! Mick!” several voices called from a large table. Mick walked over with Harry not far behind.

“Lads,” Mick said, “you’ll never believe who I ran into on me way fer a pint.”

“Never believe you anyway,” one of the men laughed.

“This ‘ere be Lord Harry Potter.”

“Nope, don’t believe you,” the man still laughed. “At sea you’re my Captain. Here, yer just a bloke known fer prarkin’.”

“I swear it’s the truth this time, Dickie.”

Harry reluctantly showed his ring.

“Blimey! It is Lord Potter!”

“Just Harry please,” Harry said.

“You livin’ up at the Manor er jus’ visitin’?” another man asked.

“Been living at the Manor about a week,” Harry said. “I have no intention of leaving.”

“There be a Lord at the Manor at last,” another seemed elated. “Praise be to God.”

“Amen!” several voices replied.

“What’s so important about that?” Harry asked.

“Er - nothing really,” Mick said. “It’ just that...”

“We’re all Potters here,” another said. “Every family is descended from a Lord Potter and - well - not having a Lord Potter kind of makes it seem like we’re missing who we truly are.”

“That and there are those who believe keeping you away from us was part of a plot by the Outsiders to seize control of our home and return it to Magical Britain,” another added.

So that’s what Dumbledore’s really playing at, Harry thought to himself.

“Like they could do that,” another said. “Everyone knows the only way into our Country is if you are a Potter by blood or marriage or if Lord Potter allows you his leave.”

“Aye,” several agreed.

“Why would we want to rejoin?” another commented. “We’ve been independent for over seven hundred years. Look what a mess the outside has become. Bloody mess, it is.”

“Aye,” Mick agreed. “So called ‘Purebloods’ tying to Lord over all. Makes me sick jus’ thinking ‘bout it. They can all bloody well rot.”

“One must be daft to want to live there,” Dickie said. “Specially given the times they’re havin’.”

“Aye.”

“Tis a pity Lord Charles passed when he did,” another began.

“What do you mean?” Harry asked.

“Ever since what happened to you all them years ago, Lord Charles had wanted to open our own school of magic here,” Mick said. “Lord Charles believed that had he not had to send his son outside to learn magic, his son would not have run afoul of that Dumbledore creep and James and you would not have been lost to us.”

“Of course,” Harry suggested, “had that been the case, my parents would never have met.”

“True, but Lord Charles planned to bring in as many Muggle Borns as possible to attend.”

“Ain’t safe fer them Outside,” a man said. “An’ it’s getting worse.”

“Aye,” several said in agreement.

“Anyway,” Mick went on, “Lord Charles was all set to start when he passed away.”

“He went into London to a meeting of that Wizen what’s it. Caught the pox, he did.”

“Lady Sam too,” another said sadly. “Tis such a shame.”

“So, where’ve you been all these years,” Dickie asked Harry.

“Er - Outside.”

“Right shame that is,” another said. “This is and always has been your home lad. We all are family.”

“I didn’t know that,” Harry admitted. “Not until a few days ago.”

“Didn’t know?” another exclaimed. “What sick bastard kept you in the dark.”

“That Dumbledore chappie, fair bet,” another added.

“Yeah,” Harry agreed. “It was his doing all along. He was the one who convinced my parents to move to Godric’s Hollow. He told them it was safer there. In reality, he just wanted them where they could be watched and open for attack by Voldemort. I was not supposed to survive that.

“When I did, he used his power in the government to suppress my parent’s real Will and to silence any real challenges. My Godfather was charged with crimes he did not commit and set to rot in prison

without a trial. I was supposed be sent back here. I most certainly was not supposed to go and live with my Mum's magic hating Muggle sister in Surrey.

"I grew up not even knowing my parents' names. I didn't know about magic or any of this. It was only when I turned eleven that I learned that I was a wizard and my parents were magical. For a long time, that was all I knew about them.

"My Godfather escaped from prison the summer before my Third Year. I now know he came to live here where he had lived before it all happened. I thought he had betrayed my parents, because that's what everyone Outside believed was true. I later learned to my horror he had not.

"He managed to challenge Dumbledore for control of my affairs and Magical Guardianship and, because he was never convicted of any crime, he won. It was his plan to return me here one day and restore me to my heritage. The problem was, he could not tell me. If he did, Dumbledore would find out and...

"Anyway, the plan was it would all happen the day I got back to where I was living this Summer. He was going to bring me here and I was to remain here, safe from that old bastard's plans. the Old Man, apparently, was and remains overseas somewhere for now and would not learn about this until it was too late.

"Unfortunately, my godfather was killed about two weeks ago. But, he even planned for that. In his Will, he emancipated me, bringing me into my inheritance which allowed me to return. As he died without children, and as I am his Second Cousin and thus eligible to be named his heir, and to stick it to all the Purebloods, upon his death, I also inherited his lands and titles. That makes me the Fifty-First Lord Potter and the Forty-Seventh Lord Black. Not that any of that matters. I'd give all up if it would bring them all back."

There was a long and uneasy silence for a while as the crew of the Maggie Marie and some of the other patrons contemplated Harry's tale.

“Nothin’ good has ever come from living outside,” one man commented.

“Well, enough of such depressing talk,” Mick said. “Tis all in the past now. Despite everything, Lord Harry is home finally.”

“T’ Lord Harry,” a voice called and everyone raised a glass, much to Harry’s embarrassment.

“Welcome home at last,” Mick added.

“Thanks,” Harry said. He then chuckled.

“What’s so funny?” a man asked.

“It’s just so different here than what you call Outside,” Harry replied.

“How so?”

“Outside, I learned I was a wizard and then that I was famous almost at the same time. I had been a nobody, really. Now I was this great hero and all I had done was not die.

“Yet from that moment on, most people fawned over me like I was some kind of Royal. I couldn’t walk down a street and not be accosted by someone seeking my autograph or a photo or asking me to endorse their stuff. As one person said - and mind you I never like this git - I couldn’t even walk into a book store without it becoming front page news. I remember watching the news once last summer. It was covering the Royal Family and I knew what they must feel like. I hated it: the fame, the attention, the fact that it might take months or even years for me to see that a person genuinely wanted to be my friend and not just have bragging rights that he or she knew the famous Harry Potter.

“I come here. Admittedly, I’ve only been out and about since lunch today, but people seem more genuine. They might know who I am,

but here it's because I'm Lord Potter. And yet, you all have treated me like I'm another person, not some high and mighty Prince or some celebrity. It's refreshing in a way."

"Lord Charles was much like you, Harry," an older man said. "He knew the only reason he was 'Lord' had nothing to do with anything he had done. All he wanted was to be a regular bloke. Of course, as Lord Charles, he had responsibilities to the Estate. But every chance he got, he was just a regular bloke and we learned to treat him that way."

"He did like his flash cars," another added, by way of counterpoint.

"But he was as ordinary as they came, and in a way that made him very extraordinary."

"Did you know, Harry," Mick cut in, "that when Lord Charles finished school, he spent the summer working on my Granddad's fishing boat?"

Harry shook his head.

"Wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty," another man added.

"Neither am I," Harry added.

"Really?"

"I've been working in the gardens, cleaning house and cooking meals - all without magic - since I was five. I didn't like why I was doing it, but the gardening and cooking I did kind of enjoy. I don't think I can cook as well as Martha - yet - but I wouldn't embarrass myself if I tried."

"Just like Charles," another man commented.

"You're more than welcome to join me and the lads for a summer," Mick said, "after you take your N.E.W.T.s of course."



“I’d - I’d like that.”

“A right proper Lord,” another voice said. “Doesn’t believe he’s above people. So not like them ‘Lords’ outside who think just cause they got lucky once by bein’ birthed, they’re better’n anyone else fer the rest of their bloomin’ lives.”

“If you was one o’ that lot, Lad,” another said, “we’d ‘ave said ‘ello and been done with ya.”

“So tell us Harry,” a man asked, “ya livin’ in that big ole Manor all by yerself?”

“Oh no,” Harry smiled. “There are others there as well.”

“Ya mean the elves or others besides the elves.”

“Others besides the elves.”

“A few friends,” Harry admitted.

“These friends wouldn’t be of the female persuasion, would they now?” a man asked.

Harry could not help but blush.

“Blimey if’n they ain’t,” an man gasped. “You can’t be more than - what? - fourteen?”

“He’s nearly sixteen Roger,” another man said. “Born July 31st 1980 as I recall.”

“Oi! You know I ain’t all up on dates like some!”

“Aye. Forget yer own birthday if’n yer Missus didn’t reminds ya!”

“An’ his Missus,” another said, “an’ his kids, an’ Christmas...”

“You lot don’t have to rub it in. Point is, he’s still a tad young to be havin’ Lady company.”

“Fiver says he’s already got ‘imself a Lady Potter,” one voice laughed.

“’ Nother fiver a concubine as well!”

“I’ll take that bet,” a few men laughed.

“Well?” several asked looking at Harry who was feeling more than just a little uncomfortable.

“Last Sunday, not long after I arrived here, my best friend arrived as well...”

“Told you, pay up.”

“Yer just assuming it’s a bloke!”

“She,” Harry continued, “and I have been best friends since I was eleven and I’ve probably been in love with her since I was twelve. She’s a Muggle Born. Smart as hell. Beautiful. Kind, caring, selfless, brave...”

“Oi, poor lad is whipped...”

“I asked for and received her parents blessing the day before and when she arrived, she became my Consort.”

“Pay up,” one man said.

“Not until we here about whether he’s got a concubine.”

“I actually have a few,” Harry began. He then told them about the other women in his life and how he came to bond with them, leaving out the physical stuff.

“The wife’s gonna kill me,” the loser of the bet moaned.

“Ah, but you’ve heard it from the horse’s mouth!”

“There is that,” he conceded.

They spoke on about what they had learned and Harry learned that three of the men had had Minerva as a teacher in primary school, years ago before she took her position at Hogwarts. He also learned that a few of the men’s wives had had Mallory as a Healer when they gave birth. One thing was clear, there was no stigma here about being a concubine. Minerva and Mallory were considered highly respected members of the community.

“Got any pictures?” Roger asked.

“Sorry, no,” Harry replied. It was a situation he needed to remedy, he thought.

“Would you like to see pictures of my family?” Mick asked.

“Sure,” Harry said quietly.

The man opened his wallet and showed a picture of a very pretty woman who appeared to be in her late thirties or so.

“That’s the real Maggie Marie,” Mick said. “We married when we were nineteen. That’s was what? Twenty-three years ago. My how the time goes by.”

Harry was now looking at a picture of a young, blonde haired girl. “That’s our youngest, Erin Anne. She’s five.” The pictures kept coming. “This is Megan Louise, she just turned seven. And here’s my only lad, Jason Lee. Quite the Quidditch junkie, he is. He’ll turn nine in October. And here’s our oldest...”

Harry could not believe the picture in front of him. She had black hair and green eyes identical to his own. She was much older than the

others. It couldn't be? But now he remembered where he heard the name "Jameson" before. All this time...

"This is Clarice Anne. We adopted her as a baby back in November of '81. She was recently orphaned we were told. She was born Outside, but that didn't matter as she was so perfect. Maggie and I loved her from the moment we first saw her! She's fourteen now. Turns fifteen this September 5th. At the time, we were certain we could not have children of our own and the local Healer agreed. She was two months old when she came to us and is our pride and joy."

"She's lovely," Harry said, too shocked to say more. He knew now. By some miracle, fate maybe, he had found his younger sister!

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16; CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68; CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16; CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14; CONCUBINE (POTTER).

## CHAPTER NINETEEN: HOMECOMING

SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1996 - Potter Manor

At dinner that night Harry left out many details about his day. He said he had a wonderful time and that he saw a lot of the estate, but not much else. All six women figured he was up to something, but he refused to say what.

"It'll be a surprise," he said with a huge smile on his face. "Now, do any of you have plans for tomorrow?"

"Not really," several said.

"I've still got some research for..." Hermione began.

"I should have said commitments," Harry said. "Clear your schedule, Hermione. It's Sunday! And I've got a nice surprise for my ladies."

They all asked what it could be.

"Now what kind of surprise would that be?" Harry asked.

Harry was pestered with questions the rest of the evening. In more romantic moments, one woman or another would attempt "pillow talk" yet all he would do is smile. All they knew is they were expected to be dressed and ready - and dress nicely, no jeans or slacks or such - and be ready at the front door of the Manor at 8:00 sharp! No lie ins!

"What about breakfast?" Hermione asked.

"It's a surprise," was all Harry said with a smile on his face.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 1996 - Potter Manor

Hermione had been sleeping in for almost two weeks now following her near death at the Department of Mysteries. Today had been a rude exception. There was no Harry in her bed to make it better. Promptly at 6:45, two Elves had woke her up almost rudely and she

found herself being potioned for her injuries and her period and herded through her morning wake up. She had been showered half asleep, dressed while she barely noticed then plopped into a chair as the two Elves did her hair. She really had not noticed but was quite put out at the treatment, although she had to admit she had not looked this pretty perhaps since the Ball her Fourth Year. Still, she was quite moody and grumpy as she arrived in the large Foyer and met the others. Conspicuously absent was Harry.

“Where is he,” She snapped. “If he’s still lying in bed...”

“Hermione,” Daphne said, “we have two possibilities here. This is either a good surprise or a stupid one. Let’s just go with it for now.”

Hermione looked at her and saw she had been done up too. All of them had been. They were all wearing nice, although not overly elegant dresses. Harry, obviously, wanted them to all look nice for some reason.

“If it’s a bad one...,” she began.

“Then we’ll all know to jump on his case,” Dora said.

“You two have any idea what this is about?” Hermione asked Minerva and Mallory who had slept with Harry the night before.

“We tried, Hermione,” Mallory said.

“Pestered him as much as we could,” Minerva said. “At least when he wasn’t distracting us. I even used my teacher mode. It always worked when he felt guilty about something.”

“And?”

“He’s not feeling guilty at all. Not a clue!”

“I even threatened to not have sex with him,” Mallory said. “He saw right through that one. I...”

“Does he have to be so good?” Dora asked.

Before anyone could answer, the front door opened and Harry stood there dressed in slacks, a jacket and an opened collared shirt.

“Ah,” Harry said as he walked forward and gave Hermione a kiss. She felt it was loving, but not demanding. “Six visions of beauty,” Harry continued as he then proceeded to kiss the others. “Your chariot awaits, my Ladies,” he added after the last of them had been kissed.

Hermione looked out and saw a huge black car with all the four doors opened. “Harry, that’s a...”

“Rolls-Royce Phantom Six,” Harry said. “My granddad’s. Hermione rides shotgun and the rest of you in back.”

“And you?” Hermione asked.

“Driver.”

“Harry James! Damn it! Do you even know how? Why? Why are you trying this?”

“Know how? Yes. Thank Tinker the Head Mechanic for that. Elf magic is amazing. Why? My Ladies deserve a date, don’t you think? You’ve been stuck here for a week, Hermione. It’s either this or brooms...”

“Harry! You’re only fifteen! Surely you can’t legally drive!”

“Actually, I can,” Harry replied. “I’m not going to leave my property. Under the law, I only have to be twelve!”

“I don’t believe...”

“Trust me on this. Please?” Harry begged. “Otherwise it’s brooms!”

“And just where are we going?”

“Well, a drive.”

“Anywhere in particular?”

“As a matter of fact, yes,” Harry said. “I’m taking you Ladies down to Pottersport. I figured you might enjoy a spot of shopping.”

“Without breakfast?” Daphne asked.

“There’s a place we’ll stop at along the way.”

“Martha’s?” Minerva asked.

Harry nodded. “I stopped by there yesterday. Martha is really looking forward to seeing you again, Minerva.”

“Martha’s?” Daphne asked.

“It’s a lovely restaurant in Potter’s Vineyard,” Minerva said. “Quite popular and the food is fantastic.”

“I better not come to regret this,” Hermione said, as she walked down the steps and proceeded to sit in the front passenger seat. The others followed and climbed into the back of the car. There were two fold down jump seats right behind the front seat which Daphne and Astoria claimed while the other three sat in back, Minerva in the middle. Once they were all in the car, Harry closed the doors before sitting in the driver’s seat.

“What changed your mind, Hermione?” he asked.

“I’ve never ridden in a Rolls before,” she admitted sheepishly.

“We’ve never even ridden in a motorcar before,” Astoria admitted.



“Then I shall endeavor to make your first motoring experience a pleasant one,” Harry said as he started the engine.

They drove rather slowly and in silence around the large oval shaped drive and then turned onto the road leading away from the Manor and through a wood. Soon they approached an intersection and on either side of the road was a rather large house. Harry stopped the car.

“Tinker told me these are two of the guest houses here at the estate. They are also the closest to the Manor itself,” Harry said. When I bring the Greengrasses and Grangers here, this is where they will live I think.”

“It’s bigger than where we used to live,” Daphne noted.

“But Harry,” Hermione said, “my parents are Muggles. How can they live in a magical home?”

Harry laughed.

“What? What’s so funny?”

“I see I was not the only one so overwhelmed by everything to pay attention to some details,” he said to Hermione.

“What are you talking about?”

“Have you noticed anything about the light fixtures in the Manor?”

Hermione seemed to think for a moment. Then she gasped. “They’re electric!”

Harry nodded. “And there are electrical outlets as well. Probably telephone lines and I saw what looked like cable lines as well.”

“When did you notice?”

“The fact that there’s Muggle technology was pointed out to me when I was out yesterday. I noticed that the Manor had been wired as well last night.”

“How? How can it work?”

“Muggle devices can be protected from magic,” Harry said. “It’s not done in the rest of Britain since that would encourage mixing with Muggles and might elevate Muggle Borns’ status. Here, it’s common place. The estate was electrified before the Second World War.”

“And the power? Where does it come from?”

“There’s a power plant in Pottersport that supplies the power to the Estate,” Harry said. Harry put the car in gear again and made a right turn at the intersection.

“Daphne? Astoria?” Minerva asked, “there’s something the two of you should know. And Hermione? You may want to pay attention as well.”

“What do we need to know?” Daphne asked.

“First off, while you still live in the British Isles, you are no longer in magical Britain.”

“What?”

“These lands which constitute the primary Potter estate are not under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Magic. You now live in the Duchy of Charenwell. It is an independent magical Country and has been for hundreds of years.”

“But the invested Lord Potter has seats on the Wizengamot,” Daphne said.

“Indeed,” Minerva replied. “House Potter has significant holdings throughout magical Britain and as an original family; the Potters have

a seat by right. They have maintained the seat by virtue of such holdings and for the purpose of trying to counter the Pureblood Aristocracy, which was why the Duchy withdrew from Britain in the first place.

“As an independent country, the Duchy makes its own laws and abides by the Statute of Secrecy as it deems appropriate. It has its own Gringotts branch, and can, as its Head of State desires, seat a representative on the International Confederation of Wizards assembly. As Lord Potter, Harry is the Head of State, of course.”

“So he is the ruler?” Astoria asked.

“No, not really,” Harry said.

“You knew about this?” Hermione asked.

“Remus told me some a couple of days ago. My position within the local government is mostly ceremonial and symbolic. I can veto a law I don't like and sack the Lord Mayor if I can show he has violated the Potter Charter, but aside from that, the day-to-day governance is left to the Lord Mayor, who is elected to five year terms by the people. The laws are made by the High Council which has seven members, each also elected to office for three year terms. Justice is handled by the Chancellor, who is a judge nominated to office by the Lord Mayor and High Council and appointed by me. He serves for so long as I allow him, apparently. If it is political power I want, I am much more powerful on the Wizengamot as, because of the House Potter and Black votes I control a large enough block directly to block any action by that body that I choose. Not quite a majority, though, so I can't pass legislation without help.”

“You will find,” Minerva continued, “that the society here is very different than what you were used to Outside. Blood status has no meaning here. Likewise the law and culture make no distinctions based upon magical ability. A Muggle here is equal to a witch or wizard in the eyes of the law and society. And yes, there are some Muggles here. Finally, and this is most important, your status as concubines does not carry any stigma here.

“As I am sure you are aware, Outside in the rest of Magical Britain, Concubines are at the lowest rung in magical society. Not so here. Although so far as I know it has been centuries since anyone here other than a Lord Potter or his heir has had a Concubine, the law and culture do not consider women such as us as little more than whores.”

“Why?” Astoria asked.

“Several reasons, all relevant,” Minerva answered. “First of all, aside from Remus Lupin and five of the six women in this car, every resident of the Duchy is either descended from the Concubine of a Lord Potter or is married to a descendant of such a Concubine. While people in magical Britain might look down upon what they believe are less worthy ancestors, such as Muggles, here each family takes pride in its heritage and as they are all at least distantly related, in each other’s as well.”

“So Harry is also descended from a Concubine?” Daphne asked.

“His Great-great Grandmother was the Concubine of Lord Edward Potter,” Minerva said. “Lord Edward had a Consort, Veronica, who had five daughters but no sons. It was Lord Edward’s Concubine Hillary who gave birth to Lord Charlus Potter, the first Lord Potter to whom I was bound.

“Throughout the long history of the Duchy, the Concubines of Lord Potter have proven women of distinction and have held the respect of the people. There have even been times when the Concubine was more respected than the wife or Consort, most recently during the life of Harry’s Great Grandmother Dorea. She never got the idea that her blood status meant nothing and it rubbed people the wrong way.

“Lord Charlus’s first Concubine Nellie was much beloved here. When she passed away, most of the Duchy attended her funeral. Only Lord Charles attended the funeral of Lady Dorea and even then he wanted to pass on it but could not.”

“And you Minerva?” Hermione asked.

“She’s quite popular with those who remember her,” Harry said.

“Even with my most difficult students,” Minerva seemed to chuckle.

“So magical children from here attend Hogwarts?” Hermione asked.

“Those of the Lord Potter do as do some others, but most attend St. George’s in London.”

“But if this is another country,” Astoria began.

“The Board of Education that controls the magic schools in the British Isles is technically under the control of the I.C.W.,” Minerva replied. “It is that Board that assigns students to the schools and as the Duchy has no school of its own and is geographically in the British Isles and ethnically English, its children attend St. George’s, the English National School or Hogwarts.”

“If education is the province of the I.C.W.,” Hermione asked, “what was with the Ministry and Umbridge last year?”

“That was a violation of the Educational Covenants enacted at the same time as the Statute of Secrecy,” Minerva said.

“And the I.C.W. did nothing?”

“The Ministry chose to keep silent on its illegal actions and, as Dumbledore quietly approved, he never reported it as well.”

“But he’s the Supreme Mugwump,” Astoria protested.

“Hence his ability to avoid the nasty fallout that is probably going to take down Minister Fudge,” Minerva said. “Had it not been for several factors, not in the least of which was Dumbledore’s suggestion that if I did not keep my mouth shut he’d see me fired and turn Gryffindor House over to Umbridge, I would have done something. As it is, I

submitted my request for retirement to the Hogwarts Board of Governors two weeks ago. I cannot work for that bastard Dumbledore anymore,” Minerva sighed. “I hope you’re not disappointed, Harry.”

“Nope,” he said. “Not in the least. And I may have an idea of how you can use your spare time around here.”

“I’m a bit old to go back to teaching Primary School, Harry.”

“I have another idea.”

“What?”

“Later.”

“You taught Primary School?” Hermione asked sensing Harry wanted the topic changed.

“I became Lord Charlus Potter’s second Concubine when I was still at Hogwarts,” Minerva said. “The fall after I finished, I started as a teacher at the local Primary School. Taught reading, writing and Literature. I did that for eleven years until my Charlus asked me to apply for a position as Transfiguration Professor at Hogwarts to keep an eye on Dumbledore. It should be noted, that the Primary Schools here were founded by a Concubine of a Lord Potter two hundred years ago or so, as were the Secondary Schools for non-magical children. They were founded by another Potter Concubine.”

“The local hospital was founded by a Concubine as well,” Mallory added.

“As will be the maternity and pediatric clinic you’re planning,” Harry said.

“If - or should I say when you study the history of the Duchy,” Minerva continued, “you will find there have been a fair few Concubines who are significant figures. A couple Lord Mayors, even more members of the High Council - all elected of course - and two of

the more respected Chancellors, to name but a few. Here, your status is not secret. It is a position that is respected, or may be if you honor your position.

“As Harry’s Concubines, you’re addressed as Madam or Mrs. Potter - or Black as the case may be in formal settings. The only real distinction between you and Hermione is she is addressed as Lady Potter in formal settings.”

“So what are you really telling us?” Daphne asked.

“Treat the people here as equals, as brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers,” Minerva said. “Treat them with friendship, kindness and respect always. Do that, and you are truly Ladies. More important, do that and you will achieve more here in months than you could realistically expect to accomplish in magical Britain in a lifetime as a witch. Women here are not second class. They are the class they choose and seek be they wife, consort or concubine.”

“I want to be a writer,” Astoria said thinking. “I want to write real histories, not that rubbish Professor Binns puts us to sleep with at school. Has anyone written a history about this place?”

“Not unless one was written in my absence,” Minerva said.

“Then I’ll start there!”

“You slept through history,” Daphne chided.

“I think,” Harry said, “the only one who did not in the last fifty years was Hermione.”

“Don’t think I was never tempted,” Hermione shot back. “Had I known it was the rubbish that it now seems, I would have brought a pillow to class!”

“Hermione? Sleeping in class? On purpose? That is something I’d pay to see!” Harry joked. “And don’t hit me! I’m driving!”

“I want to write a book too,” Daphne said softly. “Not a history, though. I want to write about the present in magical Britain and not about Death Eaters but the society that gives them existence.”

“You do?” several asked at once.

“I will call it Magical Britain, A Concubine’s Tale, I think,” Daphne continued. “Something like that. It will be about how witches are treated in that society and it will hold nothing back. We are sent to school and while there led to believe there are no limits except those we place on ourselves only to have it crash down upon us. For us, sold into this life, the blow is fast and early. Story and I and the others here are exceptions as we were lucky to be bound to a man who seems to truly care. But we all know that we are exceptions and not the rule and that by being Concubines, we learned the true worth of a witch in old magical Britain sooner than most.”

“Why?” Hermione asked with genuine interest.

“I’ll be honest,” Daphne replied. “Astoria and I had amazing luck in becoming Harry’s. I can feel that I’ll never regret that. But that’s not the point. The point is we should never have had to become Harry’s. A society that places women on such a low level, worse still, a society so bent upon bloodlines yet can still be forced to or choose to sell its daughters, a society that could consider selling its women off regardless of their parentage, ... that society should not be allowed to exist.”

“Daphne, if there was any other way I could have thought of to save you, Astoria and your family...” Harry began.

“I know you would have,” Daphne said. “I also know that there was really no other way. Had the Death Eaters been smarter, Astoria and I might not be here at all. Thank you, Harry.”

In addition to listening to Hermione, Daphne and Astoria comment on the scenery as he drove, Harry spend the remainder of the drive to Potter’s Vineyard telling them all he had learned about the duchy the



day before. Specifically, he told them about what it produced and his understanding as to how dependent magical Britain had become on that production. What he was not revealing yet was just what kind of sword that could be in the future. If Harry could figure out a way to keep his people employed and productive while at the same time cutting off all exports to magical Britain, he knew that would cause significant disruption. Kingdoms and Empires had fallen due to their inability to feed the people.

When they crested the ridge, Harry pointed out Potter's Vineyard in the valley below. He commented that he believed it was at least twice the size of Hogsmeade and mostly magical. Hermione huffed not in disbelief but over the realization that several of the books she had read about magical Britain were wrong.

"But love," Harry said as he pulled into a parking space in front of a shop near the stairs that led up to Martha's, "we're not in magical Britain, are we?"

"Good point," she chuckled.

As Harry got out of the car, he noticed the older gentleman who had spoken to him the day before standing next to Hermione's door.

"Need a hand, Lord Potter?" he asked.

"Please," Harry said as he opened the passenger door on his side and helped Daphne and Mallory get out of the car. Soon all the girls were out and the doors closed.

"Thank you, Sir," Harry said.

"I apologize, Milord."

"For what?"

"Had I known it was you yesterday..."

“Don’t worry ‘bout it. I appreciated the advice. And it’s just Harry, please.”

“John Richards,” the man smiled. “An’ ain’t you just like Lord Charles. He was right down t’ earth ‘bout most things too. His one indulgence was his like for flash motorcars such as this one.”

“Actually,” Harry laughed, “this one’s a bit fancy for my taste, but it was the only one that could hold my one indulgence.”

“That being?”

“I’d like you to meet my wife and Consort, Hermione,” Harry began. “And these are my other beautiful ladies: Astoria Greengrass Potter, her sister Daphne Greengrass Black, Dora Tonks Black, Healer Mallory Grant Black and Minerva McGonagall Potter.”

“Aye, I remember Madam Minnie,” Mr. Richards said. “She taught me reading and such in primary school when I was just a Lad. An’ I see what you mean by indulgence.”

“Long story,” Harry said.

“No doubt. Been a long while since there’s been more than one lady in residence. Lord Edward’s day, I recall hearing tell. Black you said?”

Harry nodded.

“Lord Sirius is back is he?”

“Regretfully no. He passed away a couple weeks ago. He named me his heir.”

“So you’d be Lord Black now too?”

Harry nodded.

“Sorry to hear ‘bout Lord Sirius. He was always good for a laugh when he stopped ‘round fer a trim.”

“Trim?”

“That’s my barbershop,” Mr. Richards said indicating the store front behind him.

“You could use a trim, Harry,” Hermione suggested.

“Later this week, I promise,” he replied.

“Heading up to Martha’s?” Mr. Richards asked.

“Yes sir,” Harry replied. “Didn’t get to try it there yesterday, so I figured I’d pop round today on the way into Pottersport for a day of shopping for my Ladies.”

“Well, they say the special is Kippers fresh from the boat, but if you want my opinion, the omelets are the best thing on the morning menu.”

“Thanks,” Harry said. “And I will stop by this week for a trim.”

“Looking forward to it, Harry.”

Harry then led the others up the stairs to the restaurant.

Harry thought the breakfast had been wonderful. After several minutes of Martha and Minerva getting reacquainted and Minerva promising to stop by for tea on Tuesday, the Potter party was led out onto the deck and to a large table where Harry’s Cousin Samantha Jones and her family was waiting. Harry had promised to introduce them and he had and he and they others joined the Jones family for breakfast. It turned out Mallory had delivered two of Samantha and her husband Ed’s children. There was a daughter Nancy who was in the same year as Harry, Hermione and Daphne, but attended St. George’s School in London and a son Michael who was about

Astoria's age. There were three younger ones as well: Cynthia, Candice and Robert.

The food was excellent and the view from the deck of Potter's Vineyard and the valley was worth the climb, Hermione and Daphne said. Daphne and Astoria were dragged into a conversation with Nancy about what it was like being Harry's. This made them nervous at first, but they soon relaxed and, while staying clear of potentially risqué subjects, they told their new friend about how it had come to pass. As the Potter party began their drive towards Pottersport, the two Greengrass girls admitted they enjoyed the time more than they thought they would. It felt like family to them.

Hermione had been trying to figure out how many people lived in the Duchy and the proportions of magical to non-magical residents. The truth was no one really knew. There had not been a census in over one hundred years and the population was certainly much larger now. Mr. Jones knew about how many occupied homes there were - there were 152 in Potter's Vineyard, of that he was certain as they lived there. Charlestown was roughly twice as large, even though it was founded more than two hundred years later. Charlestown was built beginning in the 1930's to support R.A.F. Pottersport. Pottersport itself was maybe ten times as large as Potter's Vineyard. And there were about sixty to eighty families who lived in farm houses or the like. Hermione guessed the population to be between six and eight thousand, but that's all it was - a guess.

"Those people were really nice," Astoria said. "I mean they all were. None of the stuff we saw back home. No Pureblood silliness or any of that."

"A fair few here probably qualify as Purebloods and a fair few don't," Minerva said. "To them, to us there are no such things. We are citizens of the Duchy and that's all that matters. You will find, however, they don't like what they call Outsiders."

"What are Outsiders?" Daphne asked.

“People who live outside the Duchy,” Minerva said. “People who do not call this place home.”

“But we’re from the outside,” Astoria observed.

“Ah, but you now live here,” Minerva said. “Makes you a local in their eyes. You’ll find there are few visitors here. Those few were all born here but left for their own reasons. While their families are still nice to them, most of the others ignore them.”

“I’ve lived here on and off for nine years now,” Dora said. “They consider me to be one of their own. They have since they first met me when I was but fifteen.”

“Ain’t no good that ever came from living Outside,” Harry quoted.

“What’s that?” Hermione asked.

“Something I heard quite a lot of yesterday. The implication being had I grown up here, all the stuff that happened to me would not have.”

“They’re probably right about that.”

“That’s Potter Castle,” Harry announced as they rounded a bend. It was a good mile or so away and they could see the high walls and towers. Hogwarts Castle had a magical, almost fairytale look to it. Potter Castle was the real deal, built to withstand a siege. The walls were whitewashed and what roofs that could be seen were of red tile, but it looked imposing as opposed to inviting. It reminded Hermione of the Tower of London and Windsor and a few other places all mixed together.

“I thought you said Pottersport was just beyond it,” Daphne commented.

“It is,” Harry replied as they drew closer. “The castle is on a bluff over the town. The bluff is a hundred feet or more high so we can’t see the town yet. The road winds its way down the bluff.”

The main road headed off to the right of the castle, but there was a branch to the left that seemed to head right for it. Harry turned onto this road. They could now see lower, grey walls of stone capped with grass on top and notches here and there with large black pipes pointed outward. The wall was not strait in any direction. It sloped upwards about twenty feet above the surrounding lands and was built with all kinds of sharp angles. It was well in front of the castle proper.

“It’s a bastion,” Hermione observed.

“A what?” Harry asked.

“That castle looks like it was from the Middle Ages,” she said. “It could stand against the siege engines of the day. Against cannon, though, not so much. The lower walls are a bastion. They are probably far enough away from the castle walls to prevent cannon fire directly and the cannon they mount would make any approach difficult. Despite the Wards, it would seem a previous Lord Potter took his defenses seriously.”

The car soon crossed a bridge over what Hermione called a dry moat and through a narrow gate in the wall of the bastion. Once through on the other side, Harry and the others saw the road lined with men in red coats with strange looking triangular hats, wide white belts forming an “X” across their chests and what looked like really old wooden rifles that were being held vertically in front with the triggers and such facing the center of the road. All looked very stiff and formal. Another man, also in a red coat but without a rifle or the “X” stood in the center of the road. Harry had no choice but to stop and the man walked over to his door. Harry rolled down the window.

“Is something going on, Sir?” Harry said to the man, “I mean I agreed to meet some friends here for some shopping and...”

“No problem, Lord Potter. Please park your car just beyond the line of guards and you and your party can get out for your ride up to the castle.”

“Erm, right.” Harry did as he was told. As soon as his car was parked - and he could see there were a fair few cars also parked in the area, he reached for the door, but it was already opening as were all the other doors to the car. Harry recognized the man holding his door. It was Remus Lupin. He was wearing a set of robes, but they were unlike any wizarding robes Harry had ever seen. They were brown, not really loose fitting and had a fur collar. Remus was also wearing a large and ornate gold chain that seemed to be draped over his shoulders.

“Remus? What’s going on?” Harry asked. “And why are you dressed like that?”

“I’d like to say this was just something I threw on,” Remus said with a laugh. “But seriously, these are the ceremonial robes worn by the Lord Mayor.”

“You’re the Lord Mayor?”

Remus nodded. “Elected to my second term last year,” he added with a smile. “Now follow me please,” he said to Harry and the others. They followed and Harry noted that the three older witches did not look as bewildered as the younger ones or as he felt. Remus led them to two tents. “Ladies,” he indicated that they were to enter the larger of the two. As they did, Harry was motioned into the smaller one. He noticed there was a barber’s chair and what looked like another set of fancy robes hanging on a stand. John Richards was there smiling at him.

“Have a seat, Harry,” Remus said.

Reluctantly and still confused, Harry sat in the chair. “Remus? What is going on?”

“Well, your ladies are having their hair done and then getting dressed up and goodness knows you need a haircut,” Remus reply.

“That’s not what I meant,” Harry growled hearing the snipping of scissors as Mr. Richards began cutting. “I like it long in front,” Harry said, “hides the scar.”

“And what scar would that be,” Mr. Richards asked.

“Oh, right,” Harry said. He had forgotten that the scar had vanished somehow when he and Hermione completed their bonding a week ago. “Remus, what is really going on? What’s with the soldiers and...”

“The soldiers are from the Charenwell Guards. It’s mostly ceremonial. They drill once a month or so and a couple of times a year they are called out for a special function. Thirty-five serve the artillery battery on the bastion for salutes. There are one-hundred twenty infantry and forty in the cavalry. It dates back to when an ancestor of yours answered the call of King George and raised troops to fight Napoleon. It was only about a battalion, but the King’s government was very appreciative. Men from here have served in Her Majesty’s armed forces ever since.

“As for why they are here today? Well Harry, they are going to escort you to your Investiture.”

“My what?”

“The formal recognition of your becoming Lord Potter and the Duke of Charenwell.”

“Remus, you know how I hate...”

“Which was why no one told you, Harry,” Remus chuckled. “And fortunately, you never asked. I’m sure had you known you would have spent your time trying to figure out a way to get out of it altogether. Your Grandfather sure did try, and he had known what was coming for years. He hated the pomp as well. But, this is about



as formal as it gets around here. And the good news is it will probably never happen again in your lifetime, unless you choose to abdicate the title in favor of your son.”

“There’s no way to get out of this?”

“No Harry. They’ve been planning this for weeks.”

“What do I have to do?” Harry surrendered.

“Not much,” Remus said and then told Harry about the ceremony.

What Harry had thought was a robe was more like a uniform. It was deep blue in color with some kind of gold lacing around the high collar, on some kind of boards on the shoulders, around the cuffs of the tunic and along the outside seams of the trousers. An odd leather belt was worn on the outside of the tunic with a strap that went from his left front waist, up and over his right shoulder beneath the gold board and down across his back to the left back of his belt. The only other adornment on the suit was the Potter crest embroidered in rich thread just above his right breast. His hair was cropped short, so short that its tendency to defy attempts at taming was no longer an issue. With no scar to hide, he liked the look.

“Shall we go and meet the world Harry?” Remus asked.

“If we must.”

Harry walked out of the tent and looked over at the women’s tent. Three of the six were also outside, all identically attired or almost so. Minerva, Mallory and Dora all were wearing white dresses with hems just above the ankles. Around their midsections was a broad, silk blue sash that matched the color of Harry’s outfit perfectly and, because Dora had her back turned, he would see the sash was tied somehow in a huge bow at the base of the back. The dresses were strapless and cut low enough to show an enticing yet tasteful amount of cleavage, should the lady have some. Another blue sash was hanging from each of their right shoulders to their left waist and was again tied into a fancy bow at the waist. Their hair was done up, each

in a manner that was totally flattering for them and they were each wearing what looked like diamond choker necklaces and matching earrings, the necklaces mimicking their collars that only he and they could see. They each had a gold band of some kind on their heads prominent just above the forehead and disappearing seemingly beneath their hair just below and behind their ears. They were also wearing white gloves. Minerva's reached practically to her elbows while the other two's pair stopped at the wrist. They all looked beautiful and elegant.

Minerva was closest to him, so Harry went up to her first. "You are a vision of eternal beauty," he said getting her attention.

"You are quite dashing yourself, Milord Potter," Minerva replied, "and I really like your hair that way."

"I only kept it long because of that bloody scar."

"And what happened to it?"

"Hermione and Remus are trying to figure that one out," Harry shrugged. "But I mean it, Minerva. You look lovely. If they made you look any younger, my thoughts alone might land me in Azkaban!"

"And what do you mean by that?" Minerva asked. "What kind of thoughts?"

"Impure ones for certain!"

"You're incorrigible, Harry," Minerva chuckled.

"So did you know about this?" Harry asked. Minerva probably knew more about the Estate than anyone else in his House. Harry figured she had to have known about this.

"I knew there would be one eventually," Minerva said. "It's never happened before that the ascending Duke was under the age of seventeen and Sirius and Remus never told me of their plans in this regard. My guess is they were certain I would have told you."

“And Dora and Mallory didn’t know as well?”

“Had Sirius lived, he may have told them. But my guess is he did not just in case. Had he told them, upon bonding they would have been compelled to tell you and - well, we who love you know how thrilled you are at this sort of thing.”

“Is there anything else I should know?”

Minerva looked up at the castle. Two large flags flew from the towers of the gatehouse. One was the Union Jack of Great Britain and the other was the flag of the Duchy.

“The good knew is it appears Her Majesty was unable to attend.”

“Her Majesty? You mean Queen Elizabeth? How do you know?”

“Her Majesty attended the investiture of your Grandfather. I’m told King George V attended Charlus’s and Queen Victoria attended Lord Edward’s.”

“Why would the Queen...?”

“The Duchy is an independent magical realm. But neither the Duchy nor magical Britain are truly independent from the Muggle realms. The Minister for Magic by Charter is entrusted with maintaining the Queen’s peace amongst our kind in Great Britain and Northern Ireland and, since its independence, the Minister is charged with maintaining the peace amongst our kind in the Republic of Ireland as well. You and your Lord Mayor hold a similar Charter from the Crown. The difference is, the Duke of Charenwell has always considered that his primary duty, whereas the Minister is probably unaware that he rules only by Her Majesty’s leave.

“Ordinarily, the new Duke is invested on a date at least one year and a day after the death or announced abdication of the last Duke. This is to allow sufficient time to coordinate with Her Majesty’s Private Secretary and Her Majesty. Obviously, there has not been enough

time and as more than a year has passed since Charles passed on, all that was required for you to become the next Duke was your emancipation, Harry."

"Thank you for that," Harry said. He then kissed Minerva tenderly. "And I meant what I said, Minerva, you do look lovely."

Harry then went over to Mallory and Dora each in turn and complimented them as well. He was sincere when he said he thought they looked amazing and blushed when they used words like regal, handsome, or as Dora had said "a real dish," to describe him. Daphne and Astoria soon joined him and they looked spectacular. He told them and was rewarded with larger smiles than he had anticipated from the honest compliment. He was hugged and kissed by both of them.

"Thank you, Harry," Astoria said. "This day is so special and thank you for sharing it with us."

"I hate being famous," Harry grumped.

"We know," Daphne said softly. "You never asked to be The Boy-Who-Lived. We saw how you hated it. Why would anyone want to be famous for what happened that night? But you are. This, however, is different."

"Don't see how," Harry complained.

"Harry, this is not your fame," Daphne said as soothingly as she could. "This is about your family. It's about what your family has done for these people for hundreds of years. It is about what they hope you will do for them as well, but your ancestors have paved that trail. You were not born to be the hero of the wizarding world, but you were born to be the Duke of Charenwell. Had you grown up here, this was in your future. Years and years from now as by all rights Lord Charlus would still be alive as would have been your father and grandfather."

"You're the youngest Duke ever, Harry," Astoria said. "We just learned that. Most Dukes rise to the position when they are

grandfathers or even later. But we are with you, Harry. You will be great because we won't let you be anything less."

"All of you?"

"All of us," a new voice said. It sounded like Hermione, but the woman in the elegant blue dress was an angel in Harry's eyes. At the Yule Ball, she had taken his breath away with her beauty. Now, this vision was so much more so, Harry melted. There was nothing about her that was not perfect. Her deep blue dress showcased the young woman she had become in a tasteful and elegant way. Her hair was amazing and she wore a diamond encrusted tiara that seemed to highlight her. Harry barley noticed the other jewels she wore. A blue sash hung from her right shoulder embroidered with the Potter crest. She wore blue gloves that matched her dress and rose to just below her elbows.

"W-wow," he stuttered. "Hermione? Wow!"

"Thanks Harry," Hermione said with a blush.

"You really are beautiful," Harry added and was rewarded by a deepening blush.

"Milord," Astoria said somewhat formally, "might I present Lady Hermione, the Duchess of Charenwell."

"Milady," Harry smiled before drawing the sixth woman of that morning into a long kiss. "You really do look wonderful," he whispered when they finally stopped.

"Thanks," she blushed back again. Harry loved that. "But try not to wrinkle the dress. I want to look perfect for the pictures and for when we dance together later."

"Dance?" Harry asked in confusion. "No one told me about a dance."

“The investiture is followed by a banquet and a ball, Harry. And we all expect you to dance with us.”

“But I can’t dance!” Harry protested.

“Don’t sell yourself short, Potter,” Hermione almost scolded. “Parvati said you were her best dance partner of the night.”

“But she hated it!”

“No, she was upset you ignored her and even more upset when it was clear you wanted to dance with someone else but lacked the courage to cut in.”

“Sorry.”

“I got you in the end, didn’t I?” Hermione whispered.

Harry nodded.

“So we will dance then?”

“I suppose.”

“COMPANY! TEN-HUT!” a man’s voice bellowed from nearby. Harry looked in the direction of the voice and saw the soldiers snap to a near rigid posture, their rifles resting butt down on the ground held in their right hand along the seams of their trousers as if they had been petrified. “FIX BAYONNETS!” the voice commanded and Harry and the others watched as a hundred or so dressed in red uniforms drew threatening looking blades and affixed them to the end of their rifles in perfect unison before resuming their rigid posture. “PRESENT! ARMS!” the voice ordered. In three uniform, simultaneous, stiff and sharp movements, the soldiers brought their rifles from their sides to a position held in front of them vertically.

BOOM! There was a loud noise to the left and behind Harry. Instinctively, he turned and looked and saw a cloud of white smoke in

the distance just beyond one of the cannons of the Bastion. The next cannon over, there was a soldier with a long stick who seemed to touch it to the cannon. BOOM! The cannon went off and another cloud of smoke appeared.

“Remus?” Harry said, “what’s going on? Are we under attack?”

“Gun salute, Harry,” Remus replied. “No attack. They are saluting their Head of State.”

BOOM! Another gun went off. Eighteen more guns would fire as the breeze brought the smell of sulfur and charcoal across the field and drifting around and beyond Harry and the others. When the last of the twenty-one guns had fired, the voice bellowed again. “ORDER ARMS!” The soldiers returned their rifles to their sides. “LEFT FACE!” As a unit, the soldiers turned sharply to the left. “SHOULDER ARMS!” and again as a unit, the rifles soon were being carried stiffly at the right shoulders of all the soldiers.

“Right then,” Remus said, “let’s get into the carriages for the ride up to the castle.”

There were two open carriages, each drawn by two horses and each painted in a deep blue with gold trim and the Potter crest emblazoned prominently on the side. Daphne, Astoria, Dora and Mallory boarded the first carriage, while Remus joined Harry, Hermione and Minerva in the second. Remus and Minerva took the front seat which faced the rear and Harry and Hermione took the front facing rear seat.

A high pitched drum began a steady beat, it was soon joined by others and a piercing noise filled the air. Harry looked and saw what he knew were bagpipes in the distance ahead of him. They began marching towards the castle playing a tune Harry had heard before but could not name.

“Oh my,” Minerva said. “Scotland the Brave!”

“What?” Harry began.

“That’s what they’re playing, Harry,” Hermione said. “It’s a famous bagpipe march.”

“And the unofficial National Anthem of Scotland,” Minerva added, her Scottish brogue more noticeable than usual. The soldiers were now marching off following the pipers and soon the carriages were rolling forward as well. Behind, the cavalry followed.

“Remus, what’s going on?” Harry said.

“I know you hate fame,” Remus said. “But this day really is not about you, Harry. The people of the Duchy of Charenwell have been without a Duke for almost eight years and have lived in fear of the British Ministry for Magic. With your return, their fears are allayed. This is their day more so than yours, Harry. Remember that. And be sure to smile and wave when we enter the Castle.”

“I’m going to hate this,” Harry grumbled.

“Harry James,” Hermione said, “this is the legacy left to you by your family! You think I want to be the Princess of Wales? But I am here for you! Smile and wave - and you will dance with me, so suck it up and take one for your family!”

“Yes Dear,” Harry replied. His voice sounded moping, but there was a smile on his face as he leaned over to kiss his wife of less than a week, “your wish is my command,” he added as the carriage entered the gatehouse and he could hear cheers ringing from beyond the gate.

“Smile and wave, Harry,” Hermione said. “Oh, I so wish my parents could see this.”

“Why?”

“I married my handsome Prince, my Knight in shining armor and all of that and that was before I knew that he was any of that. Now, oh



my, Harry! How can they object to me being your wife? Give us a kiss and - and don't break it until all can see?"

"How can I say no to that," Harry chuckled relaxing for the first time since he drove into the fortress. As his carriage emerged from the Gatehouse, he could hear the cheers from a large crowd of people. For several seconds he continued to kiss his wife and could care less about the crowd or noise. When she finally broke the kiss and began waiving, he saw that there were hundreds if not thousands in the crowd. He looked forward and saw the great keep of the Castle. Steps lead up to a grand arched entrance and it seemed there were dignitaries of some sort awaiting the arrival of the carriages as they approached. A huge banner was draped across the side of the keep.

"WELCOME HOME, HARRY!!" it proclaimed.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how. (Gr-6) indicates the House or school the girl was in and the year they last finished. No number indicates NEWTs or beyond. SG, SA, SP are for the other three schools.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

To answer one question not related to plot: How could I write this and some of the other stories I have written. They are SO different.

ANSWER: I don't like being typecast. It was an interesting challenge to write this and have a story and not just a lot of creative descriptions of certain acts...

## CHAPTER TWENTY:

### THE DUKE OF CHARENWELL

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 1996 - Potter Castle, Pottersport.

The carriages passed through huge, cheering crowds of people that seemed to fill the inside courtyard that Harry was certain was larger than a Quidditch Pitch. They rode up to the huge tower which Remus explained had been the Duke's residence when the Castle was the home of the Duke centuries ago. The carriages stopped at the steps leading to a large, raised plaza before the huge, ancient doors into the Castle proper. Several witches and wizards, all in formal robes were waiting there for the procession. The carriages stopped and Elves in Potter Robes came forward to act as footman and help the party from the carriages. Harry, it turned out, was the last to step down and he followed the others up the steps to where the dignitaries waited.

He and his ladies were introduced to the Chancellor of the Duchy, the Honorable Albert Moore as well as all seven members of the Council. In addition, there was a Sir Stephen Blaire who was introduced as the Ambassador from the Queen of England and a few other ambassadors from Magical France, Italy, Spain, Germany and the United States. Harry was told that "foreign affairs" were mostly handled from the Foreign Ministry under the Lord Mayor, but as Duke he might be expected to make State visits from time to time - although not anytime soon.

A loud fanfare played and the crowd grew relatively silent. From what Remus told Harry earlier, he knew the Investiture was about to begin.

"Good people of Charenwell," Remus spoke in a significantly and probably magically amplified voice, "as Lord Mayor of the Duchy of Charenwell, and pursuant to our Charter of 1217, it is my honor and duty to confer this realm to its new and rightful Sovereign!

“Lord Charles V, Twenty-Sixth Duke of Charenwell served his realm and people faithfully and with honor from his investiture on December 15th, 1979 until his tragic and untimely passing from our company on August 23rd, 1988. Lord Charles’ son, James Charles Potter had left these lands and tragically was felled along with his wife and my friend Lily on October 31st, 1981. The irony of this date is not lost on us, for it is the date when, in 1217, the Duchy became independent from the rest of Greater Britain. James Charles was survived by a son, Harry James, born July 31st, 1980. Alas, James died on foreign soil and Outsiders ignoring both their own and our laws deigned to conspire to keep young Harry on such foreign soil. Lord Charles, myself and others known and unknown to you all, have worked tirelessly since the tragic loss of the Heir to return Harry to his Country. His whereabouts and even his condition remained unknown to us, except to say we knew he was alive, until September 1991 when Harry followed his father and grandfathers to attend magical School at Hogwarts.

“As Lord Mayor and Steward, I petitioned Greater Britain for the immediate return of the Heir to his Country following the completion of his first year at that school. Said Petition was denied without explanation. As you are all aware, in 1993 I accepted a posting at the school Harry attended. This was with the intent of returning Harry home. I figured, wrongly, that as the school is run by the head of Greater Britain’s Wizengamot, I might be able to influence him to see that his government followed the law. When our Petition was again denied without explanation, I, joined by our friend Lord Sirius Black, decided more forceful measures were necessary.

“The plan was set to bring our Heir home this summer. It was Lord Black’s plan as he had taken over the position as the Heir’s magical guardian by virtue of the fact that Harry James Potter is a member of the Ancient and Noble House of Black and as Head of such House, Lord Black’s claim to guardianship could not be contested. Regrettably, we cannot thank Lord Black personally for his valiant efforts on behalf this Realm and our people. Lord Black fell in battle a little over two weeks ago, a battle in which I fought as well. Also fighting with us that terrible day were three who are with us today: Madam Dora Tonks Black, Lady Hermione Potter and our Heir Harry

James Potter. All fought with the skill and courage we have come to expect from those who defend this Realm and people.

“Pursuant to our Charter, it is my duty to turn the proceedings over to the Chancellor for validation of Harry James Potter’s rights of office.”

“As Chancellor,” the Honorable Albert Moore said, “and as High Court Justice of the Peace, I make the following findings of fact:

“First, that Harry James Potter is indeed before us and is indeed the eldest living male descendent of Lord Charles David Potter, the last Duke of Charenwell;

“Second, that a review of accounts conducted in the interest of House Potter into the Stewardship of this Realm by the Lord Mayors from the date of Lord Charles passing to the present revealed no cause for investigation that might delay any proceedings;

“Third, that more than one year has passed since the date of Lord Charles’ passing;

“Fourth, that said Harry James Potter by the Will of Lord Charles David Potter, is indeed the designated heir and has not been either disowned or disqualified;

“Fifth, that Harry James Potter is aged but fifteen years;

“Sixth, that Harry James Potter was the legal and magical Ward of Lord Sirius Orion Black;

“Seventh, that Lord Black passed away this June 14th last,

“Eighth, pursuant to the Will of Lord Sirius Orion Black, no successor guardian was named; and

“Ninth, by separate instrument duly filed, recorded and validate within the governments of Greater Britain and Charenwell, Harry

James Potter was legally emancipated and legally may attain his lands and titles as an adult.”

“I now make the following findings of law:

“First, that Harry James Potter is the natural and legal heir of Lord Charles David Potter;

“Second, that the requisite year and one day has passed since the death of Lord Charles David Potter, Twenty-Sixth Duke of Charenwell; and

“Third, that Harry James Potter is an adult and competent to ascend to his lands and titles. Based upon these findings, I find that the conditions of ascension as governed by the Charter and Laws of this Duchy have been met and Harry James Potter may and should be invested as the Twenty-Seventh Duke of Charenwell at the earliest possible convenience of the Lord Mayor and Steward. Lord Mayor?”

A huge cheer rose from the crowd as Harry and Hermione were told to join hands and take the center of the stage, as it were. Remus stood just in front of them facing the crowd.

“As Lord Mayor and Steward, it is my duty, honor and privilege to carry out the requirements of the Charter, Order of the Court and will of the people.” Remus then turned to Harry and Hermione and he draped a large, intricately carved and bejeweled chain over Harry’s shoulders centering a jeweled replica medallion of the Potter Seal. As he did so, he said: “I hereby proclaim thee Lord Harry James Potter, Fifty-First Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter dating to Sir Gallahad Potter of the Court of King Arthur and further proclaim thee as the Duke Harry the First, Twenty-Seventh Duke of Charenwell!”

A smaller matching necklace was then placed hanging from Hermione’s neck. “The former Miss Hermione Jane Granger of Loughton, Essex, the United Kingdom, having bonded with Lord Potter this June 23rd past, as his wife and Consort, I proclaim you Lady Hermione Jane Potter, Duchess of Charenwell!”

There was another loud cheer.

“As my second to last official act as Steward of Charenwell, I am proud to present Lord Harry the First and Lady Hermione, the Duke and Duchess of Charenwell! Long live the Duke!”

Remus then turned to the bewildered teens and said in a non-amplified voice. “It is customary to kiss the Bride at this time, Harry.” The looks on the faces of the young Potters was priceless, but they did as they were told. Oddly, Harry found it relaxing.

As the cheering subsided after some minutes, Remus’s magically amplified voice announced: “And as my last act as Steward, I turn this ceremony over to Sir Stephen Blaire, Ambassador from the Court of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second! Sir Stephen?”

“Thank you, Lord Mayor,” the elderly gentleman they had been introduced to earlier as the Ambassador said. He walked forward and to the surprise of Harry, Hermione and others drew a wand. He then conjured four large, raised cushions: one was in front of where Harry stood and another in front of Hermione, with the other two next to Hermione’s.

“Her Majesty sends the Duke and Duchess and the people of Charenwell Her greetings and regrets that prior engagements have prevented her from enjoying your company and this momentous day. She was present at the Investiture of Lord Charles and has visited your lovely realm on many occasions dating back to the Second World War.

“She particularly regrets her inability to attend today because recent events have compelled her to recognize certain of her subjects for their conspicuous heroism and steadfast devotion in defense of her people, Muggle and magical alike. As you all are undoubtedly aware, when a subject of Her Majesty’s Kingdom distinguishes themselves in the eyes of their Queen and countrymen it is customary to recognize that service, be it in war or peace. The highest honor is induction into one of the Orders of Knighthood. While most know of two such

Orders, there are in fact three, the latter being reserved for magicals who have rendered service to Her Majesty and her people. I am one of a handful of members of that Order, the oldest Order in the British Isles and one which has survived from when the Britons regained control of England following the fall of the Roman Empire.

“There are several individuals who fall into this category, four of whom are with us today. Will Miss Nymphadora Tonks and Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin please join Lord Harry James Potter and Lady Hermione Jane Potter nee Granger?”

Remus and Dora took their places beside Harry and Hermione before the Ambassador continued.

“By Order of the Prime Minister of Great Britain and with the Blessings and Thanks of the Parliament and People, for courage and intrepidity in magical combat against superior forces of the Enemy of the Realm, and despite lack of training and experience, the four of you participated in a great victory over the forces bent upon the enslavement of Britain. Without regards for your lives, you fought and defeated a veteran force of terrorists and in so doing saved countless lives. In honor of your courage and achievements, you are each awarded the Order of the British Empire!”

The Ambassador then pinned the medals on all four of them.

“Will the four of you please kneel?” They complied.

“By the wishes of Her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, by the grace of God Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, for your loyal Service to her Realm and the British People...” The Ambassador now held a sword in both hands. He walked over to Nymphadora first. As he spoke the words, he tapped her right shoulder, left shoulder and then the right again. “For God, Queen and Country, I dub thee Dame Nymphadora Tonks... For God, Queen and Country, I dub thee Sir Remus John Lupin... For God Queen and Country, I dub thee Lady Dame Hermione Jane Potter... For God, Queen and Country, I dub thee Lord Sir Harry James Potter.” The Ambassador handed the sword to



Harry. "A gift in memory of this occasion, Milord Sir Harry from Her Majesty."

"Thanks," Harry said his head spinning.

The Ambassador then draped a burgundy colored sash over Harry that hung from his right shoulder across his body. He hung similar sashes on all the others.

"Arise," he said to them all. "People of Charenwell, hear! Your own friends and neighbors have been honored! Welcome the newest Knights of the Order of the Round Table! May they go forth into the Realm with Her Majesty's blessings!"

"Oh my God!" Harry exclaimed quietly. Hermione, for once, was speechless.

The Ambassador now stood before Harry, his voice still amplified. "Milord Sir Harry," he said, "there was one Charenwell resident who should have been here with you today, but alas he fell in that battle. I hand you now the Order of the British Empire, the sash symbolizing induction into the Order of the Knights of the Round Table awarded posthumously to Lord Sirius Orion Black. And I've been further asked to hand you these documents." He then handed two papers to Harry. "The first is the Appeal to the House of Lords regarding his unfortunate incarceration. His arrest has been declared illegal and without sufficient evidence and Her Majesty's government has demanded compensation on his behalf for his unlawful imprisonment. The second is a pardon from the Prime Minister and Her Majesty for his self-executed release from prison and all crimes for which he stood falsely accused."

"Thanks," was all Harry could say. He was doing his best not to cry. The Ambassador bowed to Harry and then returned to the back of the stage.

"Harry," Remus said. "It is customary to give a brief speech to the people at this time." Harry paled, but then nodded.

“Hi,” Harry said to the vast crowd. “I am Harry.” The crowd cheered their new Duke. When they quieted down, Harry continued. “Not very good at giving speeches,” he said. “So forgive me if this one’s not so impressive. I know I have a lot of titles now, but you can all call me Harry. It’s the only title I have that I don’t find embarrassing.

“There are some things about me you all should know that have not been mentioned today. I’d rather you hear them from me first. First of all, where have I been these past fourteen years? The answer is that Dumbledore sent me to live with my mother’s Sister and her family. They are Muggles. Not very nice ones either. The best thing about finally coming home is I will never have to see them again.

“Second, in addition to all the other titles that have been bandied about this morning, I have one more. When my Godfather Lord Sirius Black died, in addition to emancipating me he also named me as his heir in his Will and I have inherited the bulk of his estate and his title. I am also Lord Black, the Forty-Seventh Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black. Rest assured though, I was born a Potter. My only responsibility as Lord Black is to have a son to carry on the line. My responsibilities as Lord Potter are to my family, my Country and my people.”

A huge cheer arose from the crowd.

“With that in mind, I would like to introduce you to my family,” Harry continued. “First and foremost, there’s my best friend, the love of my life and my wife and Consort, Hermione.” Hermione walked up and joined him, waiving to the cheering crowd and genuinely smiling, but had Harry asked, she was smiling because of him.

“When I inherited the Potter properties,” Harry continued, “well, as a Muggle raised wizard you can imagine my surprise when I learned I had inherited a Concubine.” The crowd laughed. “You might imagine my shock when I learned who she was. Many of you have known her for years and years. She taught at your Primary School before accepting a position at Hogwarts, which was where I first met her. She was my Transfiguration Professor and one of the best on staff, she was the Head of my House at School and gave me loads of

detentions..." The crowd laughed. "...and she was Deputy Headmistress. She told me recently that she is retiring to devote her efforts to me and my people. May I introduce my Wife in all but law: Minerva McGonagall Potter." There was a huge cheer as Minerva stepped forward and joined Harry and Hermione.

"From the Black Estate, I inherited two Concubines. One is known to many of you and many a child here today was brought into this world by her. As many of you remember, Lord Black lived here for a number of years and this lovely woman became a Healer and helped out at the hospital whenever she could. She was on staff at St. Mungo's in London, but has left that position to devote her time to the health of mothers and children here in Charenwell. And it's a good thing too. I intend to allow all of my ladies to have children - as many as they want. So it would seem I might be one of her major customers." The crowd laughed again. Harry felt he was warming to this. "May I introduce my Wife in all but law, Dr. Healer Mallory Grant Black." The cheers were not as loud as for Minerva but still it was very enthusiastic.

"From Lord Black, I also inherited another lovely witch. I did not know Mallory - in any sense of the word..." the crowd laughed "... but I've considered this woman a friend for the last couple of years. She was an Auror, but is resigning to devote her considerable talents to the Duchy. May I present my Wife in all but law, Dora Tonks Black." The crowd did not know her, but applauded with enthusiasm.

"And last but not least," Harry continued, "the next two young ladies are a bit of an interesting story. Their father was aligned with House Black and the Death Eaters were leaning on him for money and threatening to kill his family if he did not pay or agree to sell his two oldest daughters to whom they thought would be the next Lord Black. Unfortunately, they assumed it was someone other than me. No one ever said Death Eaters had brains." The crowd laughed. "Anyway, when I learned of my new friends dilemma, I reluctantly bought his daughters. I also gave him and his remaining family a lot of money so they could move overseas and not be threatened by those prats again.

“I want you all to know that that’s the kind of person I try to be. I will do anything to help my friends and family in need and that will not stop. May I introduce my wives in all but law, Daphne Greengrass Black and her sister Astoria Greengrass Potter.” The crowd cheered this time as the two Greengrass sisters joined Harry and the others.

“A week ago I arrived here,” Harry continued. “Prior to my arrival, I knew nothing about this. I knew only a little about my parents and nothing about my family or the legacy I would be expected to uphold and maintain. I knew nothing about Consorts or Concubines. I knew nothing about some of the more devious plots against me. I knew nothing about Heads of Houses. I knew nothing about Charenwell. As far as I can recall, I never even had heard of this before.

“Why? There are two Dark Wizards who want me dead. Both of them consider me a threat to their plans for the world. One, Voldemort, wants me dead because of a Prophecy which he believes means that I am the only one who can defeat him. The other, Dumbledore, wants me dead for that and a few other reasons. He wants to be glorified as the one who defeated Voldemort and that cannot happen if I defeat him and live. With that fame, he can then take over Greater Magical Britain and impose the same order upon it as Voldemort would. But, the real reason he wants me dead is to gain control of my Estate. I do not know if he knows about Charenwell, but if he knows he covets it because it is one thing he cannot have so long as I live and so long as I have heirs I control. Dumbledore, of course, would never want me to learn of this. Those brave souls who have worked to restore me to my proper place kept me in the dark as well, so as to deny this information to my enemies.

“A week ago, I knew none of this. It has been a steep learning curve.

“A week ago, I bonded with my Hermione and went to sleep that night with my love in my arms. I went to sleep and for the first time in my life I had a sense of family and of home. Home for me is where Hermione is - and that has probably been the case for years, even if I was too thick to realize it at the time. But Home can also be a place, a place where you want to be with your wife and where you want to raise your family.

“Yesterday, I finally had the chance to leave my studies and the Manor and start to see this wonderful land. In the course of my wanderings, I had the opportunity to meet many wonderful people. Compared to Outside, where I am either worshiped or reviled, here I am just another bloke, which is all I ever wanted to be. I spent time with families, shopkeepers and a bunch of blokes at a Pub and for once felt normal. Last night, when I finally went to sleep, I realized that not only was I home with my Hermione, I had finally found the home I had never known. And I thank all of you for that.

“I am finally home!” A cheer went up.

“But, while this is my home and will be forever, I like most of you have my concerns about what is happening Outside. A darkness is gathering and threatens to consume our Outside cousins. While we here are safe, while we here could be a beacon of light in that oncoming darkness, we are not immune from its ill effects. The one theme I have heard from my people is just how vulnerable we still are despite our wards.

“Before my Grandfather died, he heard your concerns and set out to remedy them. I learned of his plans only yesterday and now know they died with him, or at least they stopped moving forward without him. That ends today. By the fall of 1997, if not sooner, I intend to make my Grandfather’s dream a reality. I wish to open here the greatest school of magic in all Britain, if not Europe and if not the world!” A huge cheer went up.

“The school will be open to all children of Charenwell, magical and non-magical alike. I leave it to the experts to figure that one out but as I see we do not segregate here on that level in our society, neither should we in our schools. Our magicals will learn math, science and literature while our non-magicals will learn about magic. It is this segregation that led our cousins to the hell they are facing. It will not happen here!” Another huge cheer went up.

“I wish to ask my Minerva who has over fifty years experience as an educator to take the lead in this task. She has taught both magical

and non-magical courses and I cannot think of an educator more suited to this challenge. Minerva? Will you accept this challenge?"

"With honor, Milord," Minerva said.

"So there you have it. As my first act as Duke, I command that the Charles Potter Institute of Magical Studies be opened in this land for the benefit of our future generations! I will, of course, be the one paying for it."

There were loud cheers from the crowd, so loud that few heard Harry said "Thank you." thus ending his speech. Harry turned to Remus.

"That was a bit more than a few words," Remus said. "Good speech, by the way."

"Thanks."

"You really want to start that school?"

Harry nodded. "More than just for these people too. But there's not need to go into details today."

Remus nodded. "Harry, it is customary that the new Duke and his family dine separately from the other guests at the Investment Banquette. You will dine with a family of your choice, or one will be selected by lot. You have anyone in mind?" There was no way Harry could, Remus thought.

"Well, we had breakfast with Samantha Jones and her family," Harry said. "Don't think it'd be right to dine with them twice."

"So it's by lot then?"

Harry shook his head. "I came to the Castle to meet with Mick Jameson and his family. So, they're the ones who will dine with me."

Remus knew that Clarice had been adopted by a Jameson family. Perhaps these were distant relations. He really did not think a family

from Charenwell would adopt a girl from the outside. Then again, it would explain why he could not find them. No, Remus decided, this was just a coincidence.

“As you command, Milord,” Remus said earning a grimace from Harry. “If you and your ladies will follow me?”

Harry nodded and motioned to the others. Hermione soon took his arm as the others followed close behind. The doors to the castle had opened and Remus began to give them the “Five Knut” tour.

The upper floors of the tower contained the offices of the government. The Chancellor’s office, office of the Chief Solicitor and courtroom were on the first floor, the Council Chambers and offices were on the second and the Lord Mayor and governmental departments had offices on the upper four floors as well as is what used to be the barracks. The Ground Floor, while it had been redecorated and modernized, was little different from when it served as the Duke’s residence. It had the ballroom, the Great Banquette Hall, three reception rooms and the Grand and Private State Dining Rooms. Harry and his entourage were being led through the Ground Floor to the Private State Dining Room. Remus told them that the Private State Dining Room and balcony was the only room in the Castle that remained exclusive to the Duke and solely for his use.

The Private State Dining Room was about as large as the dining room in the Private Apartments at the Manor. The table could easily seat thirty people or more. The walls were covered with ancient tapestries depicting mythical or magical scenes. The back of the room was a series of arched windows flanking a large set of glass doors that led out to a balcony beyond. Remus explained that it was custom in nice weather for the Duke and his party to dine on the balcony, and as the weather was nice, that was where they would be dining.

When they walked out on the balcony, even Harry gasped at the view. While at the ground level of the Castle, the balcony was at least one hundred feet above the ground for the back of the Castle was along a bluff. It overlooked the town of Pottersport and they were higher than any of the buildings. Harry could see High Street slightly off to his

right. He pointed out what he had seen the day before to the others. High Street was where the shops were located and Harry estimated it was twice as large as Diagon Alley, but it also sold a lot of non-magical items such as televisions and such. There were a few restaurants there as well as the Gringotts branch. He told them that High Street ran practically from the base of the bluff all the way to the waterfront and Front Street.

Remus described the town in greater detail and pointed out things Harry had not seen or noticed the day before. Front Street ran from the bluffs in the east to the harbor in the west and cut pretty much through the center of the town. Another large road, Galahad Street, ran north to south, also through the middle of the town. Along Galahad Street there was a large building almost twice as tall as any of the others. This was Mistress Agnes Hospital. There were also two parks, one to the north and the other to the south of High Street. There were the Primary and Secondary Schools near High Street, a theater district that boasted six cinemas and one theater for live performances called the Opera House. There was also an art museum and the Library along with more shops and restaurants. He also pointed out the spires of St. Anne's Cathedral and St. Michael's, the two churches in the town. St. Anne's was Roman Catholic and St. Michael's was Church of England.

At the intersection of High and Galahad, there was the Public Floo Exchange and Owls Post Office. The Floo exchange needed explanation as there was nothing like it Outside. Most of the shops, restaurants and public buildings in Pottersport had floos for their workers but not for the public. The Floo system here was just like on the Outside, but if you wanted to go shopping or see a show, you came to the Public Exchange. The Public Exchange was also one of the only magical way for most people to leave the country. There were "International Floos" that connected into the British system. Only residents of Charenwell or persons granted leave by the Duke could use it. To the rest of the world, it either did not exist or was blocked by powerful wards. The only other way in or out of the Duchy for most people were Muggle means. Only the Duke, those magically bound to him, and those brought in by either could pass through the wards by other magical means.



“So there’s no way Voldemort could ever have come here?” Harry asked.

“The only way Voldemort, his Death Eaters or anyone who means harm to you or this Country can cross the wards and live to see this side is as a prisoner or slave of the Duke,” Remus replied.

“And Pettigrew? As a rat could he?”

“No,” Remus said. “The Wards are ancient and powerful. They are blood and mind based. If you were born here, you can cross. Otherwise you cannot unless invited and even then, if you intend harm to the Duke, Country or any of its people, you will die at the ward line. The wards can penetrate any magical disguise including animagus forms.”

“So, if I had been born here?”

“Voldemort would never have found you.”

“But Harry would have to leave to go to Hogwarts,” Hermione pointed out.

“Lord Charles plan for a school here was to have one opened before Harry turned eleven. The idea was once Harry entered the Wizarding world, Lord Charles would have come down on Dumbledore like Thor’s Hammer and Harry would attend school here.”

“And we would have never met,” Hermione whimpered.

“Don’t be so sure,” Remus chuckled. “Lord Charles planned on declaring a Blood Feud against Dumbledore and any who supported him in his treatment of Harry. To avoid all out war, he was going to demand that all Muggle Born children attend school here. So you would have met.”

“Harry?” Daphne asked, “is that what you’re planning?”

“The Blood Feud or the Muggle Borns?” Harry asked in reply.

“Either. Both?”

“Don’t know Blood Feuds,” Harry admitted. “But yes, the thought of making the school open to Muggle Borns from Outside had crossed my mind.”

“Why didn’t you say that in your speech?” Hermione asked almost accusingly.

“Because I tried to keep the speech focused on Charenwell,” Harry replied, “and as I have no idea how to proceed on that part of the plan, I felt announcing the school was more important than the scope of its enrollment. I need to talk to Minerva in depth to see if that scope is both feasible and how we can make it come about.”

“Oh,” Hermione relaxed. “That makes sense.”

“I did foreshadow, though.”

“How?”

“I meant it with my ‘beacon of light’ statement. We are safe here and from here we can become a beacon of light as the darkness descends. Exactly how though, that is a point to ponder.”

“Just how big is this place,” Harry asked as he looked out over the town.

“I thought we went over that,” Remus said.

“Acres, crops and that sort yes. How many people live here? Do we even know? I’ve heard there hasn’t been a proper census in a long time.”

“That was true, Milord. “You grandfather and great-grandfather knew every resident of this land such that they felt a census was a waste of time and money. Once I knew that you would return here this summer, I ordered one. Its results are written on a magical parchment that updates the data whenever there is a change.”

“A change?”

“Births, Deaths, new arrivals, children away at school, that sort of thing.”

“So how many people are there?”

“Well, Milord, as of yesterday the town of Pottersport had a population of 9,273, Charlestown 1,610, Potter’s Vineyard 868 and the rural areas 425. As far as we know no one died during the night and no new births were recorded, although we are expecting a few this coming week. Excluding you household, the population of the Estate stands at 12,176, excluding the Elves and the Goblins living beneath our Gringotts branch. Of that, 10,714 are magical and the rest are mostly non-magical families who moved here when their magical son or daughter married a Duchy citizen or remained here after the War.”

“Do we know how are of secondary school age?”

Remus nodded. “This fall 1,168 young witches and wizards will attend magical schools.”

“That’s more than there are at Hogwarts,” Hermione gasped. “And how many Muggle-Borns are out there?”

“Our estimates is that there are approximately 5,000 magic school ages children in greater Britain,” Remus began.

“Are you saying most don’t go to school?” Astoria asked.

“Actually most all do,” Remus said looking at the surprised look on the faces of the young people. “You don’t actually think Hogwarts is the only school of magic in the British Isles, do you?”

“It’s not?” Daphne asked.

“There are five others,” Remus said. “Two are in England and there’s one each in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. There’s St. George’s Academy of Magic in London, The Prince Edward School of Sorcery in York, St. Andrew’s School near Edinburgh, St. Patrick’s College near Dublin and St. David’s near Cardiff. St. George’s, St. Andrew’s and St. Patrick’s have about twelve hundred students and the other two have around six hundred each.”

“And how many of those are Muggle Borns?” Hermione asked.

“Statistically speaking,” Minerva answered, “about one third of all witches and wizards are Muggle Borns.”

“That would mean the school here would have to be able to accommodate over two thousand students total,” Hermione said with surprise.”

Remus nodded. “Lord Charles plan called for a student body of between 2,000 and 2,500.”

“The logistics are daunting,” Minerva said. “There’s no magical school of that size anywhere that I am aware of.”

“Lord Charles thought so too,” Remus admitted. “His plan called for something more like a university. There would be between six and eight different colleges, each with their own faculty, dormitories for boarders, academic buildings, dining facilities and so on. The schools could be located on the same campus and by having separate schools, there could be athletic and other types of competitions between them.”

“Kind of like Oxford,” Hermione observed.

“That was the inspiration, yes,” Remus agreed. “Oh, it seems your guests have arrived, Harry,” Remus added. Harry looked and saw Mick Jameson, his wife, three blonde haired younger children and a girl about his age with black hair and green eyes that matched his own.

“Harry! That’s her,” Hermione whispered.

“I hope so,” Harry whispered back. “Ah Mick!” Harry said walking over to the new arrivals, “glad you could make it!” Harry shook Mick’s hand.

“You really didn’t have to do this, Milord,” Mick said apologetically.

“Nonsense,” Harry replied. “The Lord Mayor told me I was allowed to invite one family to this luncheon and there are only two that I know of for certain: yours and my cousin Sam’s and we had breakfast with her family this morning so there you go.” Harry stepped over to Mick’s wife. “And you must be the famous Maggie Marie,” He said kissing the back of her hand. Have to play the Lord, he thought to himself.

“Milord,” she replied and curtsied.

“Please, I prefer just Harry,” Harry said. “Don’t let the fancy suit fool you. I’m just as ordinary as anyone.” It did not help that at least five of his ladies snickered when he said this.

“You must be Erin,” Harry said to the smallest of the family as he gently shook her hand.

“Yeah.”

“And you’re Megan,” he said to the older sister. She only managed to blush in reply.

“Making you Jason,” Harry said shaking the boy’s hand.

“Duh! I am the only boy,” Jason snarked.

“Jason!” his mother exclaimed. “Manners!”

“Sorry,” Jason replied.

“And that means you must be Clarice,” Harry said shaking hands with his sister for the first time.

There seemed to be a look of recognition on her face for a moment, but she seemed to dismiss it. “I’m adopted,” she said.

“Really?” Harry asked in mock surprise. “Do you always introduce yourself that way?”

“You were probably going to ask why I do not look anything like my parents or siblings,” she said. “Many do.”

“Actually,” Harry said, “I was not.”

“You weren’t?”

Harry shook his head. “First of all it’s rude and insensitive. But why ask a question when you already know the answer?”

“You already knew?”

Harry nodded. “Your father told me yesterday.”

“Oh. Sorry.”

“It’s okay.”

Harry then introduced the Jamesons to Remus and Harry’s ladies before inviting everyone to have a seat.

“You have six wives?” Jason asked in surprise.

“Something like that,” Harry said.

“When did you get married?” Megan asked.

“Hermione became my Consort a week ago. Arguably this is our one week anniversary.”

“That’s sweet, Harry,” Hermione whispered.

“And the others?” Megan asked.

“They bonded with me after Hermione.”

“Six weddings in a week?”

“I guess you could say that. I’ve had a very busy week.”

“I’ll say,” Maggie laughed. “It’s a wonder you can walk.”

“Mother!” Clarice said in shock and embarrassment.

Harry merely shrugged as the Elf waiters arrived with their appetizers, a shrimp cocktail and glasses of white local wine for Harry everyone except the three youngest Jamesons who had fruit juice.

“So Clarice,” Harry said, “how long have you known you were adopted?”

“My parents told me when I was seven,” Clarice replied.

“Does it bother you at all?”

“My parents have always loved me,” Clarice said. “I’ve always felt I had a family. The only thing that bothers me is I never got to know my birth parents. They died when I was a baby. Then again, they lived Outside and I would much rather live here.”

“Outside? Then how did you come here?” Hermione asked.

Clarice shrugged. "I was adopted through the agency here in Pottersport."

"Sirius," Harry said, "he must have brought her here."

"Then why didn't we know," Hermione said. "He would have said something."

"That's not what happened," Remus said. "And we had no idea what really happened that night until after you and Hermione rescued Sirius two years ago. Until then, we had no clue at all."

"What did happen?" Harry asked.

"That night, after it happened, Sirius wanted to take you and her to Lord Charles. Regrettably, Sirius was still loyal to Dumbledore at the time. We all were then. Dumbledore wanted to split you up. He gave you to Hagrid and told Sirius to take care of the girl. Sirius brought her to a friend of his who was with social services in London."

"Why?"

"That's where Wormtail was last seen," Remus replied. "He left her with his friend and then went after Wormtail. He cornered Wormy the next morning, got framed for murder and was in Azkaban before anyone knew what was happening. By the time he got out and could help, the trail was cold. We could not find his friend anywhere and..."

"Are you talking about me?" Clarice asked.

"Might be," Harry said, "Mallory?"

Mallory nodded and pointed her wand at Harry. There was a flash of yellow light for an instant. She then did the same thing to Clarice. Soon, a red smoke arose from her wand tip. She turned and nodded to Harry before sitting down.



“Clarice?” Harry said. She was too stunned to reply. “You were born Clarice Anne Potter on September 5th, 1981 in Godric’s Hollow in Wales, I believe. On October 31st of that same year, your parents’ home was attacked by Voldemort. Your parents were killed and Voldemort was destroyed. Only two survived the attack. You and your older brother. You wound up being adopted here. Your older brother was sent to live with Muggle relatives.”

Clarice and the Jamesons said nothing. They looked shocked.

“You’re birth parents were James and Lily Potter,” Harry continued. “I am your older brother, Clarice.”

“We’ve been looking for you for a long, long time,” Remus added.

“D-does this mean I have to leave my family?” Clarice whimpered.

“No, not at all,” Harry said. “Not unless you want to.”

“I don’t.”

“I’m not here to break up a family, Clarice. I am here to save one.”

“Save?” several of the Jameson’s asked.

Harry nodded.

“Saving families is his thing,” Astoria said.

“Why does my family need saving?” Mick asked.

“Clarice was born outside,” Harry said. “As such, she has dual citizenship. Her Outside magical guardian is going to sell her as a concubine at auction in two weeks.”

Clarice gasped. “But how? How can this happen? Only Daddy could...”

“A powerful man assumed control over you, Clarice. It was against the wishes of our parents and our grandparents. Lord Charles could have taken over as your guardian, but to do so he had to meet you which never happened. Or, if it did, he did not know you were his granddaughter. I, as a dual citizen and Head of two Ancient and Noble Houses can become your magical guardian and cancel the proposed sale.”

“Yet you could sell me as well?” Clarice asked as tears filled her green eyes.

Harry pulled his wand. “I, Lord Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, do hereby swear on my life and magic, the following:

“Should Clarice Lillian Potter Jameson consent to the protection of my House and to my assumption of magical guardianship over her, I shall never sell her or offer to sell her as a Concubine. I further pledge not to offer her in contract for marriage, unless said contract is by her wish and with the consent and blessing of her adoptive parents Mick and Maggie Jameson. So mote it be!”

“Who would do such a thing?” Maggie Jameson asked.

“Dumbledore,” Harry said.

“But he does not even know us?”

“He doesn’t have to,” Remus explained. “He usurped control over Harry and his sister. We believe that even though he has no idea where Clarice is, he’s selling her as part of his scheme to break the House of Potter forever.”

“And what are you doing about this?”

“Lord Black saw to it that Harry was emancipated. Had Dumbledore had his way, Harry would never have been allowed to learn about his family or heritage, must less assume his titles. Harry was to die without ever being Lord Potter. Clarice was to be lost to the world

such that her children, if she was even allowed to have any, would be heirs of nothing. Dumbledore's control of Harry died the moment Harry arrived here. Harry can now break his control over Clarice and end this plot forever."

"And if you become her magical guardian?" Mick asked.

"Any contracts entered into by Dumbledore regarding Clarice are voided. She can no longer be sold."

"And what do you get out of this?"

"I get my sister back," Harry said. "She is still your daughter, Mick. But she is also my sister. I want my family back."

Clarice looked at her parents with a questioning expression. They both nodded.

"I, I accept," Clarice said. "But do I have to live in the Manor?"

"No," Harry replied. "But I do expect you to visit."

Clarice agreed to come under Harry's House protection and a spell later, Harry became her magical guardian voiding Dumbledore's plan to sell her and end the Potter line. The rest of the meal went remarkably well. Clarice and her family enjoyed themselves immensely and Harry was pleased to see that his girls were both well treated and even respected by the Jamesons. Clarice seemed to get along especially well with Daphne and Astoria and Harry was surprised to see that Hermione had her admirers as well in younger Megan and Erin Jameson, who both viewed her as a princess or some such.

When the lunch ended, Harry escorted his girls to the ball. He later would admit he had a wonderful time dancing with each of his lovelies, as well as his sister and several other women present. He was constantly complimented on his dancing skills, which he found both odd and pleasant. The Ball also allowed him a chance to meet hundreds of people, and his ladies as well. He was pleased to see

that they were accepted in this society and was even more pleased to see just how happy they all seemed. Then again, Astoria had told him during one of their dances it was hard not to be happy when the best looking man at the ball is your husband in all but law.

When they finally got home Harry was very tired. Not too tired, but the most tired he had felt in a long while. He still had enough energy after dinner to entertain Hermione and Astoria, the two women he neither woke up with that morning nor would fall asleep with that night. Finally, around ten o'clock, he led Dora and Daphne to his room for the night at the end of what had been an unexpected and yet pleasant day with his ladies.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

His Highness, Lord Sir Harry James Potter, Duke of Charenwell, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, KRT, age 15.

1. Her Highness, Lady Dame Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, Duchess of Charenwell, KRT, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Lady Dame Nymphadora (Dora) (Tonks) Black-Potter, KRT, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Lady Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Lady Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Lady Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Lady Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

KRT - Knight of the Round Table.

And no, Harry does not know everything about what he is now yet...  
(No Demons, just more stuff)

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE:

### OF WHORES AND HORCRUXES

MONDAY, JULY 1, 1996 - Potter Manor

“Harry?” a female voice whispered softly. “You awake?”

Harry was. “Daphne?” he asked.

“Sorry,” she said. “I kind of woke up.”

“What time is it?”

“A little after six.”

“Urg! Can we go back to sleep?”

“Sure Darling.”

“Thanks.”

“I love you Harry.”

“What?”

“You deaf,” another voice said. “She said she loves you.”

“Dora?”

“You think I’ll sleep through pillow talk, guess again Baby.”

“You love me?” he asked Daphne. She nodded into his chest.

“If it makes any difference,” Dora said, “she’s not the only one in this bed who loves you.”

“Really?”

“Really. Love bond, you know. It tends to make that happen. Not that I mind. You’re a keeper, Harry Potter.”

“Most definitely,” Daphne said and she squeezed into Harry as tight as she could. “Never slept better.”

“I had a wonderful time yesterday,” Dora whispered. “You dance so well.”

“Thanks?”

“She’s right, Harry,” Daphne added. “Sissy and I had the best time. She told me it was almost like a real date. I disagree.”

“You do?”

“It was more like my wedding day than a date.”

“Really?”

“We got pictures coming and everything!”

“She has a point,” Dora added. “I thought it was brilliant.”

“All I wanted to do was take you shopping.”

“And by accident, you showed us a wonderful time,” Dora laughed.

“You made us all feel so special, Harry,” Daphne giggled.

“I should hope so,” Harry said. “Now can we sleep?”

“Hope so?” Daphne asked.

“You and Dora and the others are special, and don’t let anyone tell you otherwise, Daphne,” Harry said.

“Oh you’re so getting shagged senseless for that one,” Daphne giggled.

“Sleep?” Harry begged.

“Little Harry is telling us otherwise,” Dora giggled.

“Sleep?”

“Baby making first,” Daphne said.

“Baby making?”

“I’ve decided, Harry. I want to have your babies,” Daphne said.

“Now?”

She nodded into his chest.

“That makes two of us,” Dora said. “I want you to knock me up!”

Harry laughed. “That’s so you, Dora!”

“What is?”

“That knock me up bit.”

“I’m serious!”

Harry fought back the obvious pun about his deceased godfather.

“Okay, I give in.”

“Why surrender so easily?” Dora asked.

“Cause I have two sexy women in my bed begging for it and I know one of them can easily hex me into next week and the other will suggest just how to do so.”

“We wouldn’t do that,” Daphne protested. “Tickle you into next week, maybe.”

“Fine!” Harry said. “Give me my wand so I can give you two horny babes permission to get fat, achy and irritable!”

“Such a romantic,” Dora giggled handing Harry his wand.

“Look what the cat dragged in,” Minerva giggled as Harry entered the Private Dining room. He looked exhausted.

“Harry,” Hermione scolded, “I told you not too much wine!”

“Not wine,” Harry grumbled as he poured himself a cup of coffee, “witches!”

“Witches?”

“Daphne and Dora woke up early this morning and decided today was the day they wanted to start making babies,” he grumbled.

Astoria giggled. “Oh and my dear sister wouldn’t leave you alone?” she cooed.

“Understatement,” Harry said. “Neither of them would! Six times! Didn’t even give me a chance to shower! Six times!”

“Never thought I’d hear a teenage boy complain about too much sex,” Minerva chuckled.

“Not complaining,” Harry said with a smirk, “just knackered.”

Daphne and Dora practically bounced into the room.

“Had a good night, Sissy?” Astoria asked.

“Wonderful,” Daphne sighed. “Danced with a handsome prince and all of that.”



“Well, I did too, so do tell? What made your night better than mine?”

“Harry agreed to let me have babies.”

“So, Sissy, knocked up yet?”

“Story! Language! And I don’t know yet, okay?”

“Was it at least fun?”

“Oh yes.”

“Goodie, ‘cause I get quality Harry time tonight!”

“I’m not going to give you permission yet, Astoria,’ Harry growled.

“I know. We agreed. O.W.L.s first. But it doesn’t mean I don’t want my Harry time!”

Harry looked at Hermione for help. “This is with six witches! You honestly think I should have twenty?”

“Our friends are in that book, Harry,” Hermione said. “You know you can’t leave them to that fate.”

Harry shrugged and sat down to breakfast. “Fine! What’s on today’s agenda?”

“Remus recommends a meeting of the Order,” Minerva began.

“There’s no way I am allowing Dumbledore and his friends to meet here!” Harry exclaimed.

“Not that Order,” Minerva said calmly, “the Order that has sought to restore you to your rightful place all these years. The Order that cannot trust Dumbledore or any who are loyal to him any more than

they could trust a Death Eater, which is not at all.”

“Oh.”

“You’ll need to grant a few permissions to cross the wards,” Minerva added.

“How? I mean Hermione and the others cross without permission.”

“Not true,” Dora said. “Hermione’s permission came from your love for her. Mallory and I have permissions because our Master Sirius had them. Minerva by her bond to the last two Lord Potters. Remus had it from Lord Charlus. Daphne and Astoria have it by virtue of the contract with their father and now by virtue of your bond with them. But the rest of the Order needs expressed permission to floo in. They know how, but lack the permissions.”

“Who?” Harry asked.

“ Bill Weasley, Fleur Delacour, Alastor Moody and Kingsley Shacklebolt,” Dora listed.

“How?”

“Write their names in this ledger,” Minerva said handing Harry a bound book. “It will grant them access through your wards.”

Harry opened the book and read several entries before he found the blank space for new ones. He then took a quill and wrote:

Bill Weasley & Fleur Delacour, Kingsley Shacklebolt, Alastor “Mad Eye” Moody.

Harry then added some more names.

Neville Longbottom and House Longbottom, Luna Lovegood and House Lovegood, George Weasley, Fred Weasley.

“Now they can enter,” Minerva said. “The meeting will be at two, after lunch.”

Harry nodded and returned to eating his breakfast.

“I’ve missed you,” Harry said to the bushy brown haired girl cuddling him in his lap.

“Harry, I’ve been with you…” Hermione started.

“I’ve missed you in my arms when I went to sleep and when I woke up.”

“Harry, I still feel icky!”

“I’m just saying. I sleep better with you in my arms.”

“Oh Harry,” Hermione sighed and drew her love into a kiss.

When the kiss broke Hermione continued. “Harry, I miss you too. I love the all night snuggle with my Harry. I’m sorry I feel so icky. Can you forgive me?”

“Love, I’d only be upset if you ignored me during you ‘icky time.’ We did have a good day yesterday, didn’t we?”

“It was perfect, Harry.”

“So what are your plans post Icky Time,” Harry asked.

“To make love to you as often as I can,” Hermione giggled, “and hopefully not have another Icky Time for at least nine months.”

“Hermione!” Harry exclaimed, “are you telling me…”

“Babies, Harry,” Hermione replied. “I want babies! Sirius said you should have a life. That mean you should be a daddy.”

Harry chuckled. "You realize I have four other witches with similar intentions?"

"But they're not me," Hermione pouted.

"No," Harry said as he kissed her protruding bottom lip, "they're not. You want a baby, who am I to deny you that?"

"Th-thank you Harry."

"Should we start now?"

"Icky Time, Harry! Hopefully tomorrow it will be over. When it is, you're going to be shagged senseless often," Hermione giggled.

"Looking forward to it," Harry replied with a smirk.

"Good morning Milord Harry and Milady Hermione," a voice said. Harry and Hermione were now looking at a well dressed elf they had not met before, although something about him struck Harry as familiar in a way.

"Dobby?" he asked.

The elf bowed low. "You remember me, Milord," he said.

"Wow! You look great," he said. Dobby now was at least a foot taller than before, had the features of an Eldar and brown hair. For an elf, he looked regal. Only his eyes gave away his past.

"So you're better?" Harry asked.

"I am. I am returned to service as your Valet, Milord."

"Please, just Harry is fine Dobby."

The Elf blushed.

“How’s Winky?” Hermione asked.

“She’s doing well, Milady. She should be in service in a week or two.”

“That’s wonderful.”

“She so enjoyed watching yesterday. I did too. You two looked magnificent.”

“She saw?” Hermione asked in confusion.

“It was on the telly,” Dobby said. “The Charenwell Channel. We saw the Investiture and the Ball later on. Winky loved it all. She said Lord Harry is quite the dancer.”

“He is indeed,” Hermione agreed.

“She also said you looked like an angel, although there were things she said she would have done different.”

Hermione chuckled, “I’m sure she did.”

“I take it this is not purely a social call, Dobby?” Harry asked.

Dobby nodded. “A Mr. Bill Weasley and Miss Fleur have arrived and are waiting in the conservatory. They both arrived with their trunks.”

“But the meeting isn’t until two,” Harry observed.

“They know. They wish to speak to the Great Harry Potter on a personal matter.”

“Really? They say what?”

“No Sir. They said they need to talk to you and will wait until you are available, Sir. They are most insistent on that point.”

Harry looked at Hermione. He sighed. "Guess we have to make ourselves presentable."

Hermione nodded in agreement.

"Dobby, as soon as Hermione and I retire to our bed chambers to change into more sociable attire, you may escort Mr. Weasley and Miss Delacour to the Conference Room."

"Sir!"

Harry and Hermione entered the Conference Room from Harry's Study. He was now dressed in slacks and an open collared shirt while she wore a flattering, light blue sun dress. They both saw Bill and Fleur. Both were wearing wizard robes. Bill looked angry, but about something other than them and Fleur looked like she had been crying.

"Lord Potter," Bill began, "I really would prefer to have this conversation in private. It's very personal." Bill was looking at Hermione nervously as he spoke.

"Please, it's still just Harry, Bill," Harry began, "and I don't keep secrets from my wife and Consort."

"Wife?" Fleur asked. "Oh, poor Gabrielle will be so heartbroken. Her hero as married another. Congratulation, Harry."

"Thanks. We bonded a little over a week ago," Harry said. "May I introduce Lady Hermione Potter, Duchess of Charenwell? And do tell your sister, Fleur, that as charming as she is, she is still a tad young?"

"Charming as always, Harry. I shall try and break it to her gently."

"Thanks."

"Um, hi," Bill said. "Congratulations? Duchess?"

“Long story. So, are you willing to tell me what brings you here?”

“My Mum,” Bill began. “And no, this is not about her plots regarding you and Hermione. I assume you’ve been told of them?”

Harry nodded. “It is one of the matters I wish to discuss this afternoon,” he growled.

“This is something different, although related in a way,” Bill went on. “You see, Fleur is my Consort...”

“Really? Congratulations. When did this happen?”

“Just after Christmas,” Bill said. “I transferred back to England last fall and took a job as an accounts manager at Gringotts in order to work against Voldemort. Fleur had started up at Gringotts as well. That’s where we met and, well, we got together and...”

“Been there,” Harry said. “Over the course of the Tournament, she went from being the very good looking opposition to a friend in my view. She is quite the impressive young woman. You and yours shall be blessed.

“Merci, Harry,” Fleur said. “Such a gentlemen yes?” she added towards Hermione.

“And more,” Hermione said almost sighing.

“So what does this have to do with your Mum?” Harry asked.

“When I moved back, I lived at the Burrow. When Fleur and I married, I insisted that my wife live with me. My Mum was less than thrilled with the idea...”

Fleur snorted.

“...and insisted we maintain separate rooms and such. She does not believe the Consort Bond is an appropriate marriage for the Scion

of a Pureblood House. She seems to think that it is a bond that can be broken and, while she did not do much at first aside from being cold with Fleur, things have reached a point where I no longer feel its safe to remain at the Burrow."

"In what way?"

"You mean aside from the insults?" Fleur said with a hitch in her voice. "The woman has no shame! Called me horrid names when Bill was not around: French Tart, Whore, Half Breed, Gold-digger, Social Climber. Other names that are less polite. She now has that brat girl doing it too!"

"Surely it's not just the name calling?" Hermione said.

Bill shook his head. "Caught my Mum making another love potion yesterday. She's trying to get me to fall in love with someone else - not that it would work given the Bond."

"Who?"

"Nymphadora Tonks," Bill said. To his surprise, Harry and Hermione laughed.

"What is so funny?" Fleur asked in confusion.

"Stupid bint might know how to make a love potion, but she sure does not know how they work," Hermione said. "They cannot work for or against any person who is magically bonded to a member of the opposite sex. Molly could feed the both of you love potions all day and they'd never work. Moreover, using Dora as a base for the potion won't work either as she is magically bonded to another wizard."

"She is?" Bill asked. "Who?"

"Me," Harry replied. "She's a Concubine. I inherited her from her former Master, Sirius Black."



“You have a Concubine?” Bill asked in shock.

“Five actually.”

“Five?” both Bill and Fleur were gob smacked.

“I inherited two from Sirius, one from my Grandfather and agreed to purchase two from their father.”

“Why would you agree to that?” Fleur asked.

“Because their father is an ally and was forced to sell his daughters to Lord Black by Death Eaters or watch his entire family get raped and murdered.”

“Why would Death Eaters want you to buy Concubines?” Bill asked with suspicion.

“Because they think Draco Malfoy is the next Lord Black,” Hermione answered. “Draco is, of course, the male in the Black Line who would succeed to Head of House had Sirius not disinherited him.”

“And the Malfoy’s don’t know this?”

Harry shook his head. “The Will made me Lord Black upon Sirius’s death. The Will will not be made public until the official reading next Wednesday.”

“Guess Draco is in for a rude shock,” Bill observed.

“Indeed,” Harry agreed. “So, aside from useless love potions, what brings you here early?”

“We seek your protection, Harry,” Fleur said. “We fear not her potions - at least the love ones. Bill is immune due to our bond and I am due to my grandmother’s blood, she being Veela. But that does not make us immune from poison...”

“Or murder, which if you have not been told is what Mum intended for you, Hermione and Ginny in the end,” Bill said.

“We know,” Harry said with great disappointment. “That she would sink so low for a chance at a few Galleons...”

“It was a shock to us as well, Harry,” Bill said, “if that’s any comfort. When we learned of it...”

“Dumbledore is as bad as Voldemort,” Fleur added. “Less open, but at least as vile!”

Harry nodded sadly.

“Harry,” Bill said with concern and more than a bit of trepidation, “obviously Fleur and I cannot stay at the Burrow.”

“And you’re hoping that I might be able to help with alternate living arrangements?”

Bill nodded.

“Well, the Manor is - er - not appropriate,” Harry said watching Bill and Fleur’s faces fall a little. “But I do have seventeen guest houses that are currently unoccupied and not reserved for others. You’re welcome to one of them.”

“Harry, that’s,” Bill began.

“Thank you,” Fleur finished.

“Um, how do we get there and to work?” Bill asked.

“One of my elves will drive you around. Pick the house you want. Personally I recommend any of them on the coast. I like looking at the sea. But it’s up to you. The floo network here can take you to the Gringotts Branch in Pottersport - that’s the main town here and from

there you can use their secure network to get to the London Branch - or any other branch I'm told."

"There's a local Gringotts Branch?" Bill asked in shock. "But that means..."

"Welcome to the Duchy of Charenwell. Arguably it's the only real magical country in Europe if not the world," Harry said.

"And if Hermione's a Duchess?" Fleur began.

"It turns out the Potters are the Dukes," Harry said. "I'm the twenty-seventh Duke of Charenwell. Although everyone here calls me Harry."

"So you're like a king?" Bill asked.

"Constitutional monarch actually," Harry said. "I am Head of State but lack any power to govern and am forbidden by Charter from seeking elected office - at least within the Duchy. Same's true for Hermione, but not for anyone else in my family should they choose that path."

"So should we bow and curtsy and kiss your ring?" Bill asked.

"No. Except on occasional State occasions, I'm just Harry."

"I recall you said that."

"Darda?" Harry called and Darda appeared.

"Yes Milord?"

"Have Tinker or one of the others drive the Weasleys to the guest homes on the coast."

"They'll bring the car around directly," Darda said before disappearing.

“Pick one, move your stuff in, but floo back here for the meeting,” Harry said.

“Thank you Harry,” Fleur said, “you are a true friend.”

Harry sat in the center of the dining room table in the private apartments. Minerva, Mallory and Dora sat to his left and Hermione, Daphne and Astoria to his right as they waited for the others to arrive for the first meeting of the New Order. Bill and Fleur were the first to arrive and thanked Harry profusely for the cottage by the sea, although Fleur did complain it was too much. Why would they need six bedrooms? When Harry made a comment about children, she blushed. Harry made it clear they could live there as long as they wanted, after all it was just sitting empty.

Remus arrived next followed soon thereafter by Kingsley Shacklebolt and Mad Eye Moody, soon to be the newest member of the New Order. Moody eyed everyone suspiciously before speaking.

“I take it you’re no longer under that old bastard’s thumb Mr. Potter?” he growled.

Harry nodded.

“Bout bloody time! An’ who are the others?”

“We’ll get to that,” Harry said. “Remus, what loyalty oaths were taken?”

“Moody here hasn’t taken one yet. The rest of us swore fealty to House Potter and Lord Black.”

“Think we should add the Duke of Charenwell?”

“Duke of what?” Moody asked.

“Oaths first, explanations later,” Harry said.

“The Duke would be a good idea,” Remus agreed.

Remus, Moody, Kingsley, Bill and Fleur then swore fealty to the House of Potter, Lord Black and the Duke of Charenwell, whoever he was.

“Why didn’t any of you have to take the oath?” Moody growled looking at Harry and his ladies.

“The bond I have with each of these women precludes the need for any further fealty oaths,” Harry replied.

Moody’s jaw dropped at the implications.

“When Sirius died, his last act as my Magical Guardian was to emancipate me allowing me to acquire my inheritances. Sirius named me his heir and heir of the House of Black which became effective the moment his death was confirmed at Gringotts. As a result of my investiture yesterday, I am now Lord Sir Harry James Potter, Twenty-Seventh Duke of Charenwell, Fifty-First Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Forty-Seventh Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, Knight of the Order of the Round Table. This here,” he indicated to Hermione, “is my wife and Consort, Lady Dame Hermione, Duchess of Charenwell, Knight of the Order of the Round table. Next to her are my wives in all but law, Daphne Greengrass Black and Astoria Greengrass Potter. To my left are my wives in all but law that I inherited from the Black and Potter Estates: Minerva McGonagall Potter, Mallory Grant Black and Dame Dora Tonks Black, Knight of the Order of the Round Table.”

“So you’re saying you’re emancipated, Head of not one but two Ancient and Noble Houses and Hermione Granger is now your Consort?” Moody asked.

Harry nodded.

“You definitely screwed the Old Man’s pooch!”

“His primary plans for me are now worthless,” Harry agreed.

“What’s this Duke thing?” Moody asked.

“We are now in the Duchy of Charenwell, an independent magical country,” Harry said. “The Ministry of Magic has no authority here whatsoever.”

“And how long has it been independent?”

“Since 1217.”

“And I guess that makes you a prince or something?”

“Technically, Head of State. But I do not govern here really. I own all the land, about 250,000 acres all told, but the head of the government is Lord Mayor Remus Lupin.”

“Bloody Hell,” Moody thought. “Still, that don’t make this safe from Voldemort or his minions or free of the Old Man or the damn Ministry.”

“Alone, no,” Harry agreed. “The wards, however, do. There are only two ways to travel to and from here magically. One is that either I or one of my ladies brings you here or your are bonded to one of my rings. The other is the International Floo Exchange in Pottersport. Even then, unless you were born here, have my permission or are bonded to me, that connection will not work. Any wizard who attempts to enter these lands without my permission or leave and with intent to harm me, my House or my people will be killed at the Ward Line.”

“Those kinds of Ward are illegal,” Moody shot out.

“In Britain,” Harry nodded. “But we aren’t in Britain, are we?”

Moody nodded realizing Harry was correct in that assessment. “And Dumbledore thought you’d be safer under a Fidelius Charm or Blood Ward? Wanker!”

“I’ve come to believe he wanted me Outside so that I would be anything but safe. He’s as much a threat as Voldemort, just not as obvious.”

“Hence why I’m here,” Moody said. “Wanker left me for dead for a whole year for that Crouch brat. There’s no way the Old Man did not know it was not me.”

Harry nodded in agreement.

“There are a few things I want to discuss before we get down to business,” Harry said. “First of all, my sister Clarice.”

“What about her?” Kingsley said. “Have there been any new leads?”

“Sister?” Moody asked.

“I have a younger sister,” Harry said. “While she survived the attack on Godric’s Hollow as well, she’s been missing ever since. Until very recently, all that was known about her was that she was adopted by a Jameson family a few days later.”

“And now?”

“Ran into her adoptive father down at a Pub in Pottersport on Saturday. She’s now under House Protection.”

Remus confirmed this.

“How’d you know it was her Old Man?” Moody asked.

“I didn’t. We got to talking. He showed me pictures of his wife and kids and there she was. He told me her birth date, that she was adopted from Outside and she has an uncanny if feminine resemblance to yours truly. We confirmed it yesterday.”

“Ever think of being an Auror, Milord?” Kingsley asked.

“Just Harry, please. Yes. But this Duke thing makes that a bit of a problem. The Ministry might not appreciate a foreign potentate on their payroll.”

“But what about your seats on the Wizengamot?” Bill asked.

“My seats as both Lord Black and Lord Potter predate the Duchy. Different rules. As I have lands in Britain, I keep my seats.”

“How many votes?”

“Including the Black votes, 212. Not a majority, but that does not include allied votes.”

“Houses Longbottom and Bones have 73 votes,” Moody noted. “They almost always followed the Potter lead. 16 more and you hold a majority. You’d control that government for all intents and purposes.”

“I have no intention of doing so unless and until it becomes necessary and even then only when necessary. If the Old Man moves against me in the Wizengamot...”

“He has enemies. They’d side with you just to spite him.”

“My thoughts exactly. As I understand it, I have enough votes to deadlock the assembly. Again, it will only be used when necessary to thwart the Pureblood agenda.

“Another of my contingency plans is economic. Seems I can break both the Old Man and the Death Eaters. The Old Man embezzled over three million from me over the years. With penalties and interest, well my letters from Gringotts suggest his careful financial plans are not unassailable. He would be broke.

“Thirty-four Death Eaters or their supporters are living in Black properties and have not paid rent since before I was born. The least amount owed is close to three million. Again, interest and penalties



and I have the ability to freeze and confiscate most of their accounts. For now, I am planning to do just that, but probably only against those who were arrested recently following the Department of Mysteries.”

“Why just them,” Bill asked.

“They attacked the Head of one Ancient and Noble House and the Scion of another,” Daphne said understanding Harry’s idea. “Under law and Custom, Harry is allowed to retaliate without fear of repercussions.”

Harry nodded. “It would appear as retaliation for an attack on the Houses,” he said, “not a direct attack on Death Eaters and Voldemort. It might make him think twice about trying something similar.”

“I wouldn’t count on that,” Moody said. “That thing is unstable.”

Harry sighed in agreement. “Still, to the Ministry and people, it would not be seen as part of the ongoing war.”

“That much is true,” Moody agreed. “Collateral damage at most.”

“Third item,” Harry said. “The Concubine Auction.”

“But Hermione and Clarice are safe from that now,” Fleur said.

“Yet a lot of our friends are not,” Hermione added.

“I don’t have a final list yet, but I intend to buy all of our friends - at least all the ones who are still up for sale.”

“Why?” Moody asked.

“Because I don’t want them to become little more than whores,” Harry snapped. “Here, they have a chance at a life. As a Concubine in Britain?”

Moody shrugged.

“Moreover,” Harry continued, “it is my plan to overbid on my targets purchases - massively.”

“Why?”

“The first on the lot is Hannah Abbot. She’s a friend of ours. Asking bid is 200. I intend to open the bidding at ten times that.”

“And what will this achieve?”

“Aside from guaranteeing that I get her, hopefully I can cause a gross inflation in bidding, thus making it very hard for any other bidder to buy any of the ladies not on my list, at least the ones who are not already Concubines.”

“You intend to effectively corner the market on new women?” Bill asked.

“That is my intention.”

“And what purpose will that serve?”

“It should inflate prices across the board,” Harry said. “This will hurt or not cripple the slave market. I find the whole thing repugnant.”

“Not so much as not to have some for your own,” Moody pointed out.

“My ladies are no more slaves than you are,” Harry shot back. “The only part of the bond they are still under is a permanent fealty bond! That’s not the same as being a slave!”

“Fine.”

“Is it possible to warn the girls?” Fleur asked.

“How do you mean?” Harry replied.

“We know who they are, yes? Could we not send them a letter telling them what would happen? They could leave the country or find a bond mate or both?”

“Makes sense,” Harry nodded. “I really don’t need twenty women like that.”

“There are problems with that idea,” Minerva said. “Most notably, there is the time factor. We have two weeks before the Auction.”

“And you can add to that complication the little problem that the Auction list we have today might not be the one on Auction Day,” Dora said. “They don’t close out the book, as it were, until the Thursday before the Auction. Until then, women can be added. Should one bond out before she’s paid for in full, she’s safe regardless. But if’s she’s added the Thursday before?”

“How do you...” Hermione began.

“When we learned of Dumbledore’s plans for you, Hermione, my job was to find out all I could about the Auction. I’ll admit being a concubine myself I was curious. But my curiosity alone is of little use. But being an Auror supposedly investigating illegal activities? I was able to get some rather interesting information.

“If we sent out letters today, it might help one or two girls,” Dora continued, “but that’s just speculation. She’d have two weeks to find a bond mate and complete the bond as payment is due up front.”

“What do you mean?” Harry asked.

“Each buyer must provide what they are willing to spend before they bid. Usually this is done by authorizing their Agent access to their accounts up to a certain amount. If you don’t have the gold to make the bid and have not authorized your Agent to bid that gold, you cannot bid at all. Basically, the transaction is completed the second the auctioneer says the girl is sold.”

“But it’s still a chance,” Hermione said.

“A very, very slim one at best,” Dora replied. “Ask yourself this, Hermione – and understand you seem to be more emotionally mature than most girls your age: if this was a few weeks ago, would you have offered yourself to Harry?”

“If I knew the alternative? Yes, of course.”

“Why did you wait as long as you did?”

“You know I didn’t know what the oath did!”

“That aside, why did you wait until this summer? Why didn’t you and Harry get together sooner? What changed?”

“He told me he loved me,” Hermione replied in a soft voice. “He really loved me.”

“And before he told you that, would you have thrown yourself at him?”

Hermione shook her head.

“And why not?”

“It was not about the sex,” Hermione said. “I had those feelings for him as well, but I wanted more than just sex from him.”

“And?”

“And, I was not about to give into that if sex was all I could expect from him. It had to be love!”

“Exactly!” Dora replied. “Most likely you waited because you feared either rejection or that the deeper feelings were not reciprocated. Just about any girl could get good and shagged by almost any boy Harry’s age if they let him know they were ready, willing and able. But the

bond is not about the sex. The sex is the ritual that finalizes the bond, but without the love, you can make the oath and all you would have accomplished is to lose your virginity. In two weeks, you would still become a concubine.

“And if you had received a letter let’s say a couple of months ago saying you had a couple of weeks, or even a couple of days to become a Consort or be sold into slavery against your will, what would you have done? Be honest.”

“I don’t know,” Hermione said honestly. “More than likely, I would have thought it was a sick joke or the worst pick up line in history and ...”

“Ignored it. But let’s say you believed it. What then?”

Hermione shrugged. “Maybe tried.”

“With whom?”

“Harry, of course.”

“What if he refused? What if he said he respected you too much or didn’t see you that way?”

“He doesn’t,” Hermione protested.

“Obviously,” Dora said with a smile. “This is a hypothetical. What if you believed you had to bond or become a slave and Harry chose not to bond with you? What would you have done then?”

“I don’t know. Ron I guess?”

“Who doesn’t love you at all,” Dora said, “so it would have failed. And what if there was no Harry in your life at all? What if you never had a boyfriend or even a boy who was your friend? Most girls your age do not have the relationship you have with Harry. They either are in a teenage romance, which will not create the bond, or they have no

relationship at all. What if they're younger? They can be bound at any time after their sixth menstrual cycle. Usually, if they are Muggle Borns they are older. Still, I was not yet thirteen when I was first bound. How would those girls react, assuming they did at all? They would either throw themselves at a boy – any boy – in the vain hope to avoid being sold, or they might have considered the only other effective way of avoiding becoming a concubine by their own means.”

“What’s that?”

“Suicide,” Dora said. “A dead girl is safe from being bound.”

“That’s not an option!” Harry shot out. “I will not be a party to that! What about Fleur’s idea of fleeing the country?”

“That might give the girl peace of mind for a time,” Dora said, “but the sale would happen anyway and the nature of the bond is such that the girl could be summoned from anywhere. The only hope for any of the girls is becoming a Consort, which is not something you can just run out and do. And, if the girl is a Muggle Born or any other young witch who has no wizard family member acting as her magical guardian, while she is off the market, the probability is another girl would take her place. If it is Dumbledore’s intent to sell let’s say ten girls this summer, ten will be sold; or at least ten will be offered in the final days before the Auction. As I understand it, Dumbledore submits the list of primary sales and another list of secondary ones and he always offers a couple more girls than he needs just to make sure his sales don’t suffer because a girl is lucky enough to become a Consort. Hermione’s bond with Harry saved her, but some other girl is going on the block in her place most likely.”

“So we’re back to the original plan,” Harry said with disappointment. “We buy the lot of them.”

“Basically,” Dora nodded.

“Any other schemes?” Moody asked after a long pause.

“As a matter of fact yes, but this one is for later.”

“And?”

“Charenwell is the largest supplier of meat, fish, grain, fruits and vegetables to Wizarding Britain. In some cases, we supply over eighty percent of the market. Should the Purebloods seize control of that government and move - as I suspect they will at one point - against the Muggle Borns, I will consider a blockade and cut off their food supply.”

“And what will that do? They’ll just buy from elsewhere.”

“At greatly inflated prices, it would result in runaway inflation which would probably bring down the government.”

“Interesting,” Moody said.

“And what about your people, Harry?” Remus asked.

“That plan probably won’t be put into effect for some time, Lord Mayor. In the mean time, we expand our trade with the Continent. Hopefully, when we pull out of Britain, there will be ample markets abroad.”

“And if not?”

“We set up a dummy company on the Continent to sell our food to Britain - at greatly inflated prices, of course.”

“You sure you’re not a Slytherin?”

“The hat did want to sort me there.”

“Why didn’t it,” Daphne asked.

“Cause I told it not to. There was no way I wanted to be in the same House as Malfoy.”

“Wish I had thought of that,” Daphne sighed.

“What about direct action?” Moody asked.

“You’re looking at all we have, Mad Eye,” Harry said. “We are in no position to engage in combat operations except on the smallest of scales. We need to train and recruit and train some more before we could hope to make a dent without suffering unacceptable losses. Remus told me that it may be months or longer before Voldemort moves on the Ministry. That gives us time.”

“My guess is he’ll off the Old Man before making any such move,” Moody said.

“How?”

“No idea.”

Harry nodded.

“Well, that’s all that I have,” Harry finished.

“Hermione?” Remus asked.

“Um,” she began, “Remus had me doing a bit of research this week about Horcruxes.”

Without waiting for questions, Hermione was in full lecture mode. She told everyone what a horcrux was - a powerful magical object used to store a piece of a Dark Wizard’s soul. So long as the horcrux survived, the soul fragment contained within it acted as an anchor. The Dark Wizard’s soul remained anchored to the world even if his body was destroyed.

“That’s what Dumbledore thinks happened that night in Godric’s Hollow?” Kingsley asked.



Hermione nodded and continued. Dumbledore and told Dora and McGonagall, in different contexts, that he believed that Voldemort had made six of those objects. He knew the diary Harry had destroyed Second Year was one. He believed most, if not all of the others were related to a Hogwarts founder. The Old Man believed that one was a ring that belonged to Voldemort's Pureblood grandfather. Another was a locket that had belonged to Slytherin. A third was a cup that had belonged to Hufflepuff. The Old Man knew that because he had been searching for them since the end of Harry's Second Year and had obtained memories from various places that showed that Tom Riddle a/k/a Voldemort had stolen these items from their rightful owners then murdered them framing another for his crimes. The last two were speculative at best, Hermione reasoned. One might be something that had belonged to Ravenclaw and the other the Old Man believed was his snake. Not that any of this mattered as the Old Man still had no clue where any of them were aside from the snake, which was usually with its master. Until all the Horcruxes were destroyed, Voldemort remained immortal. Once they were all destroyed, he was as mortal as anyone.

That brought up the second problem. Even if you could find them, and avoid any traps placed upon them to keep them safe, there were only three ways known to destroy them. None of them were easy. First, you could destroy the magic. There were only two known ways to do this. The First was with Basilisk venom, which while there was a great ruddy one moldering beneath Hogwarts, those beasts were hardly common. Or, you could use a rare type of magical sword which was impractical because they were so rare. The only known one was the Sword of Gryffindor which was locked in the Old Man's office at Hogwarts. The second way to destroy a horcrux was to destroy the soul fragment itself. The only way to do that was with a Killing Curse cast by a witch or wizard more powerful than the one who made the horcrux in the first place.

"Which poses a problem for the moment," Hermione said.

"Why's that?" Moody asked.

"What is your Ganter Scale Score?"

“460, well above average,” Moody said with a hint of pride.

“490 myself,” Hermione said with a smirk. “Voldie’s a 505.”

“Bloody hell! Anyone more powerful?”

“Right now only the Old Man. He’s a 535.”

“And Harry?” Daphne asked.

“478, before Mallory began unbinding his magic.”

“His magic was bound?” Minerva asked. Apparently, she was not in on this information. “It should not have been bound! Even if it was, it should have been released his First Year. Poppy checks for that sort of thing.”

“Aye, she does,” Moody agreed. “The Old Man probably obliviated her.”

“What?”

“The Old Man bound the lad when he was seven.”

“Why?”

“What was the lads Ganter score?”

“478,” Harry said.

“That’s a 478 bound. You can nearly double that with the bindings released if it’s done safely.”

“Dora said it should be around 930.”

“Merlin’s Beard,” Bill said.

“More like Merlin himself,” Moody laughed. “The kid was bound because by age seven it would have been hard to send him to Hogwarts and into the Old Man’s care.”

“Why’s that?”

“You were quite the accomplished young wizard without a wand, Harry,” Moody said. “We only learned it when we finally caught you.”

“What are you talking about?”

“The boy taught himself more magic than most adults know by that age. All of it learned from his own imagination. At seven, he learned to apparate. Now, we cannot detect wandless magic, but apparition? Kid was jumping all over Britain that summer for the fun of it. Took us two weeks to catch him. That’s when the Old Man bound him.”

“But I have no memory of that!” Harry protested. “I apparated once!”

“That was the first time. The Old Man let you remember your first bouts of magic, but not how you learned to control it. He obliterated most of your childhood.”

“Bastard!” Harry growled.

“Dumbledore,” Moody sighed. “Tell you what. I’ll prepare some pensieve memories of the Great Harry Hunt of 1988 for your amusement.”

“I guess.”

“Of course, a 930 explains why you survived the Killing Curse in ‘81.”

“How?”

“Old Barty didn’t teach you everything I know, I see,” Moody chuckled. “The Killing Curse is pure hate based magic. In addition to

the emotion, it works by overpowering the opponent's magic. Killing Muggles and Squibs that way is easy, but witches and wizards? The spell cannot kill a witch or wizard who is measurably more powerful than the caster. The Inner Circle Death Eaters are all over 400 but barely. The average witch or wizard is around a 275 to 300. Thus it appears the spell is instant death. Now this is Top Secret and treason for me to reveal but bollocks the Ministry. Frank and Alice Longbottom were both close to 500. Not one of their assailants was anywhere near enough power to kill them. True, taking the curse can still mess you about. Throw in the Cutiatus and that's why we think they're in St. Mungo's. Most any other witch or wizard would be pushing up daisies.

"Now Harry here? If he really is a 930, the whole lot of Death Eaters and Voldie himself can cast Killing Curses at him while he throws them raspberries and buff his nails and he might feel a tickle."

"So Harry's invulnerable?" Bill asked.

"To that curse yes," Moody said. "But a near squib with a well aim blasting curse can still blow his head off. Physical effect magic does not rely on overpowering the raw magical core. Still, I'd love to see his shield charm as a 930! That is core based. Where were we?"

"Ways to destroy a horcrux," Hermione said.

"Sorry 'bout going off point."

"It's okay, Moody, it would have come up anyway."

"Why?"

"You'll see," she smiled. "So, we covered two ways. Destroy the magic or the soul. The third is to destroy the object. Only one way to do that and that's Fiendfyre."

"Right nasty stuff that is," Moody said.

“And please note it is also hate based.”

Hermione then described what her books told her happened when a Horcrux was destroyed. There was at the very least a flash of magic as the magical container broke, a wisp of a black smoky substance as the soul was released, followed by a scream of pain as it died. She then described that something exactly like that happened when she and Harry climaxed at the end of their Consort Bonding ritual.

“It’s true,” Dora added. “I was there.”

“Mon Dieu,” Fleur said, “you had a witness to the rite?”

“She walked in,” Harry shrugged. “I was a bit preoccupied at the time.”

“Good thing too Buster,” Hermione growled.

“Yes Dear,” Harry said getting a laugh from the others.

“So Harry was a Horcrux?” Bill asked.

“The Old Man suspected as much,” Moody replied. “Told me that when Sirius and I insisted we train him in combat. Said he had to die to destroy Voldemort.”

“Bastard,” several voices said. Harry heard two sniffs and quiet sobs to his right and saw the sisters were looking at him and crying. He felt a lump in his throat.

“So what you’re saying is the Horcrux that was Harry is gone?” Kingsley asked.

“There was the flash of magic, the smoke and scream and when it was over Harry’s scar had disappeared,” Hermione replied.

“From a Consort Bond?”

“Well,” Hermione blushed, “there was a bit more. I combined the final phase of the bond with a druid based purification ritual - that’s what the Runes were about Remus.”

“Why didn’t you say that,” Remus asked.

“’ Cause you were watching Dora’s memory of the moment and commenting on what a cute ass I had!”

“Hey!” Harry complained. “No perving on my wives!”

“Sorry,” Remus said contritely.

“Why did you do that?” Fleur asked. “Did you know Harry was a horcrux?”

“No. I did it because it is supposed to exorcise demons. Harry has had a lot of pain in his life and I felt combining the rituals might help him find some happiness.”

“So was it the Purification Ritual that drove out the Horcrux?” Fleur asked.

“It certainly helped. The two rites were love based magic performed and completed at the height of a mutual expression of love by a very powerful witch and wizard. Horcruxes are hate based. The Arithmancy I’ve gone over in the last few days regarding those magics suggests the combination of rites, love and our magic drove Voldie’s soul fragment out because the container had become hostile to it and once out, it was destroyed.”

“I take it that’s not all?” Moody asked.

“Okay,” Hermione slumped, “now we’re dealing with supposition. Until Voldie, no one had ever attempted to make more than one of those vile things. But, there was a book we acquired from the Black library that explained the Arithmancy of a horcrux in detail. Most of

my research this past week has been into that. The numbers suggest that if you create more than one, they are interconnected in a way.

“Now, if you destroy one by the normal means I told you, the others will survive. But, that’s not how Harry’s was destroyed. The numbers suggest that a powerful love based attack - it being the opposite of the hate that’s needed to create the things in the first place - might set off a chain reaction.”

“A what?” Moody asked.

“As the horcruxes are interconnected by hate,” Hermione replied, “destroying one with overpowering love magic might lead to the immediate destruction of all the others!”

“Any way to prove this theory?” Minerva asked.

“Not without verifying destruction,” Hermione admitted. “It’s a pity we didn’t have one in our possession before.”

“Bugger!” Moody exclaimed. When the others looked at him he continued. “When did this happen?”

“Last Sunday afternoon,” Hermione replied. “Why?”

“Meeting of my part in the Old Man Order last week,” Moody replied. “Snape reported Voldie’s fell into a coma that day. Our Ministry spy says the same thing. Snake Face is still out cold, but regrettably he should live. Throw in the fact that Voldie’s pet disintegrated in front of a few Death Eater that day and ...”

“Then it’s probable his horcruxes are gone,” Hermione said.

“So we attack?” Dora asked.

“He’s still got a shit load of Death Eaters,” Harry shot back. “No. Now we train and recruit. We take out the lone targets. When we go for Voldie, ideally he’ll be the last of his kind left!”

“Last?” Bill asked.

“My force will not stun and arrest,” Harry said. “A Death Eater raises a wand, they are to be killed. Blasting curse should do the job. From what I’ve read guns will too. I learned the hard way. You put a Death Eater down, he should stay down forever!”

“But that means we’re as bad as they are!” Bill protested.

“Are we?” Harry replied. “Rape and murder any Muggles lately? That’s what they do! Death Eaters deserve their name! They deserve death without mercy or quarter. If they are marked, open season and they die! Their supporters deserve no less! This is a war. In war you kill the enemy!”

“We are not bad, Bill. We don’t rape and murder the innocent. That’s what you have to do to earn the Dark Mark of a Death Eater! Every philosophy in every culture recognizes that killing in a just war is not immoral. It is a moral imperative! My plan is this: Voldie wins for a time. The people see for once that hiding their heads in the sand is suicide and we then offer an alternative. In that process we exterminate Death Eaters. When the final battle comes, Voldie will stand alone and I will shoot him with a gun like the rabid dog that he is!”

“I still can’t...”

“Bill? If I learned one lesson from the Department of Mysteries it is this: you put a Death Eater down PERMANENTLY!”

“And Dumbledore?”

“For now, it’s between him and Voldie. We’re in no position to engage yet. But, come across the random Death Eater; feel free to kill them for the cause.”

“I’m not sure I can.”



“Bill, you do remember my talk of economic warfare?”

Bill nodded.

“If you cannot serve on the front lines, you have the skills to serve in that arena.”

“Sir!” Bill replied.

A buzzing sound went off in the room from three locations: Dora, Kingsley and Moody.

“Bugger!” Moody exclaimed.

“What?” Harry asked.

“All hands on deck recall,” Dora said. “All qualified Aurors are to report for duty.”

“Why?”

“Fair bet,” Moody said, “Voldie’s minions have done something major. Sorry, but we have to leave.”

Harry nodded in understanding.

“I promise to try and off a few Death Eaters for you,” Moody added with a feral grin.

“Every bit helps,” Harry smiled in reply.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

William (Bill) Weasley, age 25 (born 6/15/71)

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19 (11/4/76); CONSORT OF WILLIAM WEASLEY (12/27/95).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: NEVILLE AND SUSAN

MONDAY, JULY 1, 1996 - Longbottom Manor, Lancashire, U.K.

Neville Longbottom had just had a wonderful day wandering the estate with his “secret” girlfriend. They had been officially dating almost a year now, although aside from their families, they both doubted anyone had noticed. It’s not that Neville was somehow embarrassed being with the lovely red head at his side. He was not. And he knew that Susan Bones was in no way embarrassed about being his girlfriend. They both believed that their private lives were just that - private. It also helped that few people ever really paid them much attention.

Both of them had seen this relationship coming for some time. Susan had sat next to Neville in their very first class together even though she was in Hufflepuff and he was in Gryffindor. It seemed from then on whenever Gryffindor and Hufflepuff had classes together, she and he were a team. In many ways, they were each other’s first friends at Hogwarts and their friendship grew over time.

They were very similar young people from oddly similar backgrounds. Both were from Purebloods lines (Susan’s Mum was a Half-Blood), but from lines that abhorred Pureblood Supremacy and dark magic. They were both orphans in a manner of speaking. Susan’s parents had been murdered when she was a baby and she had been raised by her paternal Aunt Amelia Bones - her father’s equally dead and buried younger brother’s wife - who was now the head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. While Neville’s parents were not dead, they had been tortured to the point where they lost their minds. They had lived at St. Mungo’s in a long term care ward for as long as Neville could remember. Neville was being raised by his grandmother.

Although each of them considered the other their romantic interest well before, it was the summer after their Third Year when they really began spending time together. Neville would go and visit Susan and she would come here to visit him. They did their homework together and talked for hours at a time. Neville and Susan knew all about each other and each of them came to enjoy the other’s company and

friendship. Susan was the only person Neville ever told about his parents. He was not ashamed, he just felt what had happened was too private and did he not want pity. Susan, he knew, would not pity or belittle him

Fourth Year, the two began spending time together as friends at school. Oddly, even though they frequently walked the grounds together and went into Hogsmeade village together, no one seemed to notice. When the Yule Ball in honor of the Tri-Wizard Tournament was announced, Neville asked Susan to be his "date." She really wanted to, but she needed to ask permission from her Aunt to stay at school over the holidays. Her Aunt refused. Oddly, the two expected that. Aunt Amelia missed her niece terribly. When Susan reluctantly had to decline, it was she who encouraged Neville to ask another girl. He did and she was a little surprised at who he chose. She asked him why he asked Ginny Weasley. He told her it was because of her red hair. He felt he could at least pretend like he was dancing with Susan.

It was during the dance that it dawned on Neville that he really did have feelings for Susan. It took Neville over six months to work up the courage to tell his best friend that he loved her. They were eating ice cream in Diagon Alley on a sunny summer day about a week after the summer holidays had begun when he told her how he felt. He did not know how she would react to this. Her reaction sealed the deal. She kissed him senseless. He then asked her to be his girlfriend, and she said yes.

Neville had unofficially proposed to her the day after he was released from the Hospital Wing after the battle at the Department of Mysteries. She had unofficially said yes. The day after they left Hogwarts for this summer, Susan and her Aunt joined Neville and her Gran for tea at Longbottom Manor. It was then they told their guardians of their intentions for the future. They were both a little nervous when they told. They were still very young. Susan was sixteen and Neville would not turn sixteen until the end of July. They were both pleasantly surprised when the two older witches gave them their blessing - provided they finish school first before any public wedding or certainly any children.

What Amelia Bones and Augusta Longbottom talked about next stunned and mortified the young couple. They both got the “talk!” That was horrid enough, particularly because the two older witches had described certain sexual acts in graphic detail. But then the proverbial other shoe dropped. They were told that because Susan’s father was dead and had died without a will and as she was, for all intents and purposes the last member of the House of Bones, her magical guardian was Albus Dumbledore.

Amelia told the couple that as the guardian, he had final say over whether they could marry - or at least ordinarily he did. He also had the authority to sell Susan off as a concubine. The women told the two what this meant and it horrified them. Worse still, Dumbledore almost always sold the better looking witches off the summer after they completed their O.W.L.s. Susan was good looking objectively speaking and this was that summer.

They were then told how to avoid either fate - as in not being able to be married to each other. Susan could, if she wanted, become Neville’s Consort. They were told in detail what this meant and more importantly what they had to do for this to happen. They liked the idea of being magically bonded as husband and wife, but were very nervous about what they had to do to have that come to pass.

Afterwards, Susan told Neville she had wanted to do such things with him. He admitted to her that she was the only person he had thought about doing those sort of things with. They both admitted, however, they needed a little time. That was a week ago.

Neville and Susan had spent this day by a lake on the Longbottom property. She had not left the Manor since that day, except for the trip to Diagon Alley when Neville’s Gran, proud of her grandson for what he had done that night at the Department of Mysteries, bought him a new wand. Susan was proud of him too. She told him had she known, she would have been there beside him and he knew it was the truth. The young couple had been inseparable ever since.

This afternoon, Susan told Neville she thought she was ready and she wanted to wake up tomorrow morning in his arms as his Consort and wife. Until now, while they were very close, their physical

relationship had not progressed beyond kissing, hugging and snuggling. That had changed when Neville told her he agreed that if she thought it was time, then it was time.

Susan was lying on top of him under the shade of an oak tree when he agreed that they should bond today and wake up married in the morning. She kissed him passionately and for a long time, which he did not mind in the least. She also ground her hips into him mercilessly, something she had never done before and to Neville's embarrassment, she brought him to orgasm. When he shyly told her what had just happened, she giggled, before sitting up and straddling his waist. To Neville surprise and delight, she then proceeded to take her top and bra off. After giving Neville plenty of time to admire her this way, which thrilled her to not end, she told Neville she no longer wanted to wait. They would bond beneath this tree. They would become lovers and she his Consort before sunset. She formally offered herself to him and he accepted.

They had spent the afternoon naked in each other arms learning all sorts of ways to please the other with their hands and mouths. They lost their virginity together under that tree and made love four times before they decided it was time to head back to the Manor for dinner and their wedding night. They were, after all, now Neville and Susan Longbottom. Susan had offered herself to him and he had accepted and the bonding rites had been done. She now bore the gold collar only he could see as proof. It was a little earlier than they had planned, but the Longbottoms both believed it had been perfect.

They were walking down a path through the woods towards the Manor, arms around each other's waist and Susan leaning her head into his shoulder. They most certainly were in no hurry and strolled slowly, both content to be in each other's arms and feel the other beside them. They were both in their own world and the rest of creation had ceased to exist for them.

A loud noise from somewhere up ahead brought them back to reality. Neville recognized something. He immediately drew his wand and whispered "trouble," to his lover. She drew a wand too, hoping he would not charge in, but knowing she would stand with him

regardless. Neville recognized the sounds of a magical battle ahead. He did not move.

“Neville?” Susan asked with fear in her voice.

“Someone’s attacking the Manor,” Neville whispered.

“What do we do?”

“Stand here,” Neville said. “We have no idea what’s up ahead and I am not going to risk your life on some fool’s errand. If anyone comes this way, we defend ourselves, okay?”

Susan could only nod.

“Aurors!” a voice called in the distance. The two teens soon heard something or someone coming towards them through the surrounding underbrush.

“Shield charm,” Neville whispered. Susan quietly cast the spell which would give them some protection from magical attack. Two figures dressed in black were running towards the teens but had not seemed to notice them. Neville knew these were Death Eaters and that was not a good sign. Still, having faced them before...

The two in black stopped short about ten feet from them, both breathing heavily. Neville recognized one immediately.

“Reducto!” he screamed, blowing the wand arm and a good portion of the witch’s chest to pieces. The woman was dead before she hit the ground. The other witch was too shocked to react.

“Reducto!” Susan said, blowing the other witch’s head to pieces.

“Wh-what just happened?” Susan asked.

“Death Eaters,” Neville replied. “That one was Bellatrix Lestrange,” he added pointing to the witch he had just killed. “No idea who the other one was.”

Neville walked over to the remains of the woman who had ruined his parents, bent down and picked up her wand and placed it in his robes. Susan did the same thing with her victim. Neville saw a glint of gold on his right hand and looked. There was a ring on it that was not there before.

“Damn!” Neville said. He knew what the ring was. It was the ring worn by the rightful Lord Longbottom. That he was wearing it told him that he was now the Forty-Eighth Lord Longbottom and that meant only one thing. His grandmother was dead.

The same day that Neville and Susan announced their intentions to his Gran and her Aunt, his Gran took him aside and told him she was proud of him. She had always worried about her grandson and whether he would be a powerful wizard like his parents and grandparents. Until this past year, there had been a nagging doubt in her mind. But this past year, and especially the way he had fought against the inner circle of Death Eaters had shown her he was every bit the Warrior-Wizard his ancestors had been.

She told him she had changed her guardianship over him. He would come into his inheritance this summer, no later than his sixteenth birthday on July 30. He could come into it sooner should his Gran die. Neville was not yet sixteen. The ring had been charmed that night to appear on his hand the moment he became emancipated and that meant Gran was dead.

Neville looked at Susan and noticed she was throwing up. The remains of the two Death Eaters were fairly gruesome, yet oddly Neville felt nothing. He had just killed a woman - moreover the woman who had taken his parents away and had killed Harry's godfather and he felt nothing. There was no remorse nor any feeling of justice. All he felt was a pain of sadness for his Gran and sympathy for his fiancé who was now hugging him tightly.



He wept silently for his Gran, who lay dead somewhere up ahead.

“Nev? You okay?” Susan asked.

Neville showed her the ring. “Gran’s gone,” he said softly.

“Oh Neville,” she wept. “Amber?”

How could I forget, Neville thought to himself. Then again, he had a reputation for forgetting things. He touched the ring and saw “ASH” appear where the family seal had been.

“She’s alive,” he whispered. He shifted his wand to his left hand and touched the ring. A few seconds later an older witch appeared. She had dirty blonde hair, pale blue eyes and was clearly crying. As soon as she saw Neville and Susan, she ran to them and hugged them both tightly.

“Thank Merlin!” she said. “Thank Merlin you’re okay! I thought...”

The new woman in his arms was named Amber Harker. She was thirty-three years old and had been Neville’s Nanny and later teacher before he had started at Hogwarts. Since then, she had helped his Gran around the Manor when he was at school and taught him magic during the holidays. Amber was also a Concubine.

Amber Harker was a Pureblood witch. She was the youngest of three children and the only daughter of the Harkers. Her father, while not a Death Eater, openly supported them in the First War. Both of her older brothers would become Death Eaters. They were all gone now. Her parents had died years ago. One of her brothers was killed in combat and the other had died in Azkaban after the War. When she learned of the fate of her family, the irony of it all could not be ignored.

During her Fifth Year at Hogwarts, Amber had fallen in love with a Muggle Born boy in Ravenclaw. She was a Slytherin, but was generally not loathed by the other houses as much as her House Mates. She had lost her virginity to the boy that year and she had been caught by no less than her own Head of House in a

compromising position with her lover in an empty classroom dreadfully late after curfew. In addition to detentions, her Head of House wrote to her father and told him not only that his baby girl was sleeping with a boy, but that the boy was a Muggle Born.

Amber's father believed in blood purity and no child of his would sully herself with what he considered filth. When she returned home following her O.W.L. exams that summer, as soon as she entered her home, she was summarily disowned and then handed over to a Death Eater whom her father had sold her to. She never set foot inside Hogwarts again and spent the better part of the next two years as little more than a whore for the Death Eater Corps. Her first Master was killed when she was eighteen and she was then placed for sale in the spring of 1980. Frank Longbottom bought her.

Neville's parents, Frank and Alice Longbottom were a very popular Pureblood couple in 1980 when Amber became Frank's concubine. They were aligned with the "Light" cause and were considered real up and comers in the Auror Corps. They were also generally opposed to Pureblood traditions and any notions of supremacy based upon heritage. Still, they were aristocratic and wealthy. Frank was the forty-seventh Lord Longbottom and could trace his line back to Sir Hector Longbottom, a Warrior-Wizard and member of King Arthur's Round Table.

When Alice Longbottom became pregnant with Neville, she and her husband were twenty-four years old. They had been Aurors for over three years and had been married for almost seven. Alice became Frank's Consort before the beginning of their Seventh Year at Hogwarts, the day after they learned they were to be Head Boy and Head Girl the next year, a privilege of which they shared a common apartment. After they finished, they both entered the Auror Corps and trained hard for three years before receiving their credentials in the spring of 1977.

Four months before Neville was born, Alice took a six month leave of absence, but made it clear to her husband that she had every intention of returning to full duty once her leave was up. It was around then that Frank purchased Amber. As Purebloods, the notion of having a Concubine was not an issue at all. Wealthy Pureblood

families typically had Nanny's for their children and most often these were Concubines. Amber was bought for that purpose, although she still had to sleep with Frank on occasion.

Amber had enjoyed her life at Longbottom Manor. When Frank and Alice were injured and rendered insane, she stayed on as Neville's Nanny and later his teacher. She knew one day he would become Lord Longbottom and did her utmost to ensure she would be retained as Neville's Concubine. She and Neville had become very close, but not yet intimate. When Susan started coming around a few years ago, she made sure to become the young witch's friend as she knew Neville might well fall for Susan. She had encouraged Neville to take the big step and become Susan's girlfriend, a step he might not have taken otherwise despite his strong feelings for Susan.

Neville had known Amber was a Concubine and more to the point would become his Concubine since he was nine. He didn't know what that meant at the time, but he did by the time he was thirteen. For ages it had terrified him. But over the last year, mainly due to Susan, he had come to accept it. Susan was not about to let him not keep Amber and he had recently promised Amber she would be a Longbottom for the rest of her life.

"I'm yours now," Amber said as she cried into his chest.

Neville could only nod.

"Who killed them?" she asked noticing the bodies of the fallen Death Eaters.

"Susan and I," Neville said softly. "Reducers at close range."

"Hmph! Well the one with the head is the bitch that got Augusta!"

"Bellatrix LeStrange," Neville said. "She also got my parents. Should have killed her when I had the chance a couple weeks ago."

"You did the right thing," Amber said. Neville could merely nod in reply. "Augusta killed two of the bastards before..."

They looked up when they again her someone crashing through the underbrush. Neville and Susan immediately were alert and their wands pointed in the direction of the noise. Amber followed, but doubted she could do anything useful in this situation. Neville motioned for the two to spread out and they complied. He knelt on one knee, wand at the ready and his two friends did the same.

“Halt!” Neville yelled out. “Identify or we will open fire!” Neville then tucked and rolled to one side as a spell coursed to where he had been. He fired a stunner back, just in case it was a friendly. He could only shoot at where he thought the spell had originated, but was rewarded with a ‘thump’ indicating he hit his mark. “I SAID IDENTIFY!,” he yelled.

“Aurors,” a voice called. “Lower your wands!”

“I am Lord Longbottom! Lower your wands, advanced and be recognized or I will shoot you for trespass on my land!”

Another spell shot towards him, and he ducked and rolled to his original position and fired back. Another thump told him two of whatever they were facing were down. A lone man appeared. He was tall and dark skinned and his wand was lowered and at his side. The man saw he was covered by three wands and there were two corpses on the ground. He looked at Neville. Neville recognized him from the Department of Mysteries and relaxed a little, but kept his wand aimed. Neville stood slowly, still keeping the drop on the man.

“I am Auror Shacklebolt,” the man said in a deep voice. He then noticed the two death eaters. “I take it you killed them?”

“I killed LeStrange,” Neville nodded. “My - my wife Susan killed the other,” he added nodding his head towards her. Susan smiled. He had said it. She was his wife!

“Who was shooting at us?” Neville asked.

“A rookie Auror, hell bent for glory,” the man shrugged. “The other is just an ass who’s full of himself. Sorry.”

“Least they can’t shoot strait,” Neville said lowering his wand and he noted his two friends did as well.

“Reducers?”

Neville nodded. “We made the mistake of using stunners at the Ministry. If you put a Death Eater down, keep them down.”

The Auror nodded in agreement. “Well done, Milord,” he said.

Neville gave the tall Auror a curt nod.

“You’re in danger here,” the Auror continued.

“You think?” Neville shot back. “And here I thought this was just another Monday!”

“Your grandmother...”

“Is dead! I know. What the bloody hell is going on?”

“Death Eaters sprang a rather elaborate attack. We think you were the target of this one, Neville.”

“M-me?”

Kingsley Shacklebolt nodded. “About two hours ago, several Death Eaters attacked the residence of Amelia Bones, Head of Law Enforcement...”

“Auntie?” Susan exclaimed. “Is she okay?”

“She’s her niece and is her ward,” Neville explained.

“I’m sorry, Milady. I don’t know. All of the on duty Aurors responded and then these attacks occurred. I can tell you they attacked the Weasley’s, Lovegoods and a Muggle home we believe belonged to the Grangers.”

“Bloody hell!” Neville croaked.

“We think they went after Madam Bones to draw the Aurors before hitting their primary targets, The Ministry Six.”

“How many? How many here?”

“Four. All dead. The headless witch is most likely Alecto Carrow - a nasty piece of work. Your Gran offed her brother and another by the name of Stedley before...”

“Least she got her licks in,” Neville nodded.

“You need to leave here...”

“I think I figured that bit out myself!”

Shacklebolt walked forward cautiously as Neville, Susan and Amber still had him in their aim. He held out a candy bar wrapper.

“Emergency Portkey,” he said. “It will take you somewhere safe.”

“Is there anywhere safe?” Susan whimpered.

“This place is. The total number of people who can get there and are not there right now can be counted on one hand with fingers to spare. And even we cannot get there if the owner changes his mind about access. I can assure you, it’s as safe as anywhere in this country. More so, even. Not even Hogwarts is as safe right now.”

Neville nodded. “They’re going too,” he said indicating the two witches.

The Auror nodded. "Grab hold you lot," he said. Neville, Susan and Amber did as they were told. "Lily's Boy," the Auror then said and Neville felt the uncomfortable tug behind his navel and the portkey activated and pulled them to wherever. Neville closed his eyes as he had learned it was less disorienting to travel by this method with eyes shut. When he felt solid ground beneath him, he would open them and decide whether to attack or defend. He felt solid ground again and even before he opened his eyes, a familiar voice called his name.

"Neville? Susan?" a young man asked.

Neville saw his friend and several others in what looked like a dining room to him. "Harry?" he asked. "Hermione?"

Susan wrapped an arm around Neville's waist and Neville responded in kind as he also took the hand of Amber. Others in the room who were paying attention could not help but see what had transpired before their eyes. Harry seemed to waive his hands and the three people sitting immediately across from him rose and vacated their seats to take other empty ones further down the table.

"Please Neville," Harry said, "have a seat."

The offer was obviously not for Neville alone, but applied to Susan and Amber as well. Neville nodded and guided the two to the three seats, although as they sat, his two girls scooted over so they could be close to him.

Suddenly there was a slight "pop" and the body of a young, blonde haired girl was floating a couple of feet above the table where the people were sitting.

"It's Luna," Hermione gasped! "Is she okay?" she added to no one in particular, as it seemed to Neville. Neville watched an older witch point her wand at Luna and the young woman floated to a wall and was soon seated against it.

"Stunned," the witch said. "Aside from that, no injuries of note."

“Can you wake her up?” Hermione asked.

“Eneverte,” the witch incanted and the young woman’s eyes fluttered open.

“What? Where am I?” Luna Lovegood asked in a curious tone.

“What do you remember?” the witch responded.

“I was down by the creek looking for some Freshwater Plimpies for dinner and didn’t find any,” Luna replied. “I was walking back through the woods to my home and then ... just now waking up here. What’s going on?”

“Are you in any pain,” the witch asked?

“N-no,” Luna replied.

“Can you stand up?”

“I - I think so.” Luna stood and looked at the others in the room. “Harry? Hermione?” she began.

“Have a seat, Luna,” Harry said. Luna took a seat next to Amber.

“Where am I?” she asked.

“Good question,” Neville added.

“Potter Manor,” Harry said. “Neville? What happened? Who gave you the portkey? There’s no way you could get here without it.”

“Death Eaters,” Neville said. “They attacked my home! Susan and I were in the woods when it happened. We were walking back for dinner and ... and I heard spell fire! We held our ground not knowing what was ahead of us and soon two Death Eaters came running through the woods towards us...”



“Attacking?” Hermione asked.

Neville shook his head. “I think they were trying to reach the wards to escape. My guess is the Aurors had arrived then. Anyway, they saw us and we were ready for them. Dropped them dead. Both of them.”

“Who?” Harry asked.

“How?” McGonagall added.

“Sorry Professor,” Neville said acknowledging Minerva for the first time. “I...”

“Never mind, Neville,” Minerva said.

“The how were reductor curses,” Neville said, ignoring the fact that McGonagall had called him by his first name for the first time ever. “They really make a mess of a person at close range and Susan and I were about ten feet away when we opened fire. Mine blew off Bellatrix LeStrange’s wand arm and a fair bit of her chest. Susan blew the head off the other one. They were both dead before they hit the ground.”

“Why’d you use those?” a voice asked.

“If I learned anything at the Department of Mysteries is that when you drop a Death Eater, make sure they stay dropped!”

“And the spell isn’t illegal,” Hermione added.

“It’s nasty at close range,” Neville said. “Had I aimed for the bint’s midsection I’d have cut her in half. Learned later that there were four of them. Gran killed two - don’t know how - before LeStrange got her. Susan and I got the others before the Aurors arrived and I had to stun two of them Aurors before this Shack guy and I could talk. He gave us the portkey, Harry.”

“Is it really safe here?” Susan asked.

Harry nodded.

“That Shack guy said they attacked my Auntie’s first,” Susan whimpered.

“And then yours, Neville?” Harry asked.

Neville nodded. “And then the Lovegoods’, Grangers’ and Weasleys,” he added.

“Well,” Hermione said, “attacking my parents’ home was a waste.”

“H-how so?” Susan asked.

“My parents left the country last week and won’t be back anytime soon. And I live here now.”

“And attacking the Burrow is a bust too,” Bill said. “Fleur and I are here, Percy lives in London, Fred and George have a flat above their shop in Diagon Alley and the rest of my family left to spend a week at my Aunt Muriel’s this morning.”

“Sounds like they were going after the Ministry Six,” Harry said.

“That’s what that Auror Shack told us,” Susan added. “He thinks the attack on my Auntie was to draw the Aurors away so the other victims would be defenseless.”

“If that was Voldemort’s plan,” Harry said still annoyed that some people gasped at that name, “then it was a colossal failure.”

“What do you mean,” Susan asked.

“None of the Ministry Six were harmed,” Harry said, “four are now under such powerful wards and protections that no one can get to them. At least four Death Eaters, including his top Lieutenant Bellatrix LeStrange are dead. It’s a fair bet others may have been killed or

captured. Regardless of what else may have happened, this was not a good day for the bad guys. They might now look back on the Department of Mysteries as a high point in their war.”

The group heard voices approaching the room and they were soon joined by Kingsley Shacklebolt, Alastor Moody and Dora who took seats at the table. When Moody saw the new guests he actually laughed. “Definitely picked the right side this time,” he growled before sitting.

“Well?” Harry asked.

“Bad day for the other side,” Kingsley said. “They launched a very well planned and coordinated attack against numerous targets. Their first attack involved twelve Death Eaters. They attacked the home of Madam Bones, the Head of Law Enforcement. Since the Department of Mysteries, four Aurors are assigned to her as guards. All on duty Aurors were called in. In the end, five Death Eaters were killed, six captured and one was unaccounted for.”

“And my Auntie?” Susan asked.

Kingsley shook his head sadly. “I’m sorry Miss. Madam Bones and the four Aurors assigned to her were killed.”

Susan was again crying into Neville’s shoulder.

“About an hour after that attack began, four additional teams hit targets throughout England. We believe they were after the Ministry Six. A team of four Death Eaters attacked Longbottom Manor. Madam Augusta Longbottom killed two before being killed. When we arrived, the other two ran off into the woods where they had the misfortune of running into Lord Longbottom and his Lady. That force was wiped out even before we arrived as back up. All that was left was for me to portkey Lord Longbottom and his friends here.

“A dozen Death Eaters attacked the Burrow. There was no one home at the time, but the attack tripped the wards we set up. Moody led the assault team on that one.”

“Six of the bastards are dead,” Moody said, “the rest are on their way to Azkaban.”

“We think four attacked the Rookery - the Lovegood home,” Dora added. “By the time we arrived, they were gone. We found Mr. Lovegood dead and one dead Death Eater in the front parlor. I found Miss Lovegood in the woods. She appeared stunned and I portkeyed her here. I’m pleased to see she looks okay.”

“The only attack that was not a disaster for the enemy was the one on the Grangers,” Kingsley said. “Of course, there was no one home at the time. By the time our assault team had arrived, the place was empty and the enemy had escaped.”

“And what will the reports and papers say about Neville, Susan and Luna?” Harry asked.

“That they are missing,” Kingsley said. “The others believe they may have been kidnapped by the enemy and, of course, who are we to correct that notion?”

Harry nodded and looked lost in thought for a moment.

“Harry?” Hermione asked in a whisper, “I think introductions are in order.”

“G-good idea.” Harry stood up. “My wife believes proper introductions are in order. I’ll begin with me, I suppose,” he said looking at Amber, the only person in the room he did not know. “I am Harry Potter, The-Boy-Who-Lived, and the new one - what was it those bastards at the Daily Prophet are calling me now?”

“The Chosen One,” Minerva replied.

“Brilliant,” Harry said sarcastically, “famed wizarding hero of children’s stories and comic books, basilisk slaying, dark lord defeating trouble making orphan, Tri-wizard Champion, Most Eligible Wizard in Witch Weekly fourteen years running, Leader of the

Ministry Six and co-defeater of Toad Woman, the evil pink cardigan wearing monster of Hogwarts.” By the end everyone was laughing as Harry had intended.

“Seriously, though,” Harry continued. “This is Potter Manor and all the land for miles around belongs to my estate. Until a week ago Sunday, I never even knew about this, much less had I ever been here. I should have been born here and if my parents and I had stayed here, well the Boy-Who-Lived would never be, because for all intents and purposes, this Estate does not exist. The Ministry of Magic has no knowledge of its existence at all. Surprising when one considers it’s about half the size of London.”

“Blimey mate,” Neville said.

“The boundaries of the estate are miles from here,” Harry said. “Four miles to the front as a broom flies, five to either side and sixteen to the sea which is the back of the property. There are three towns entirely within the estate. Potter’s Vineyard is about eight miles from here and produces Elf Wines for export. It is also where the Dairy is located. The estate is the largest supplier of wine and dairy products in magical Britain.

“Charlestown is about seven miles from here and is where our meat packing and produce packaging operations are located. We are the largest supplier of produce, eggs, poultry and pork products in magical Britain. That’s where we also package herbal based potions ingredients. Neville? You should visit the greenhouses there! They put Hogwarts to shame.

“The largest town is Pottersport, located on the coast about twenty miles from here. It is a fishing port and our fleet supplies almost all the seafood in magical Britain. We also have a brewery and distillery there. Oh, and the shopping there rivals Diagon Alley.”

“How many people live here,” Susan asked.

“Over twelve thousand all told, most of them magicals,” Harry said. “And this is not part of wizarding Britain. You are now in the Duchy of

Charenwell and in addition to my other real titles, I am the Duke of Charenwell, its Head of State. The Ministry of Magic has no authority here whatsoever. We answer only to Her Majesty Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth and Defender of the Faith and so on and so forth.

“Anyway, I knew none of this when we left Hogwarts. A day after I got back to my Aunt and Uncle’s, I’m here at the estate, I learned that Sirius Black was my Magical Guardian and I became emancipated upon his death and that I am now Lord Harry James Potter-Black, Fifty-first Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter dating back to Sir Galahad Potter of King Arthur’s Court and by designation of Lord Sirius Black, my cousin, the Forty-Seventh Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black.”

Neville stood up. “I am Lord Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, Forty-Eighth Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom dating back to Sir Hector Longbottom of King Arthur’s Court.”

“Really?”

“My Gran made it so I would come into my inheritance upon my sixteenth birthday or her death, whichever came first. Unfortunately...”

“I’m sorry, Neville.”

Neville shrugged and sat down.

“And this lovely vision of feminine perfection seated beside me,” Harry continued indicating Hermione, “is my wife and Consort, the Lady Hermione Jane Potter.”

“Since when?” Susan asked. “I mean, not like there much of a surprise, but you only started dating.”

“She became my Consort the day after we left Hogwarts.”

“Congratulations,” Neville and Susan said.

“I always knew you two would,” Luna added in a dreamy yet somewhat disappointed voice.

“You do know Milord,” Susan began.

“Please, just Harry,” he replied.

“You do know that as the head of two houses you can take another Consort.”

Harry nodded glancing at Luna who seemed to be staring at him. “Asking for the job?”

“I’m already spoken for,” Susan replied with a little giggle.

“Harry, Hermione?” Neville said, “may I introduce you to my wife and Consort, as of this afternoon, the Lady Susan Marie Longbottom.”

“I didn’t even know you two were dating,” Harry said. “Congratulations, by the way.”

“Thanks,” Neville replied. “Actually, we’ve been officially dating for a year although I think we both saw ourselves as dating sort of probably since the beginning of Third Year.”

“I can’t believe we never noticed,” Hermione said. “Then again, maybe we just were not paying attention. I mean, you two always have sat together in class and...”

“There are certainly advantages to not being Harry Potter,” Neville laughed. “Everyone watches him - and you Hermione because of him - so no one watches us.”

“Besides, until today all we ever did was kiss,” Susan said. “The ‘boyfriend’ thing at school usually involves broom closets and getting caught. An occasional kiss tends to go unnoticed.”

Harry then proceeded to introduce the others. Neville and Susan remembered Professor Lupin from Third Year. They learned now he was a werewolf. He had lived at the estate for years and aside from his stint at Hogwarts and a few years as an Auror, he worked here as a manager. He was also the Lord Mayor of the Duchy, similar to the Minister for Magic. He was currently dating a lovely witch from Potter’s Vineyard. They were then introduced to Kingsley Shacklebolt and the real Madeye Moody, both highly regarded Aurors.

“Next,” Harry said, “are Bill Weasley and his wife and Consort Fleur Delacour Weasley. Bill is the oldest of the Weasley’s and you may remember Fleur was the Tri-Wizard Champion from Beaubatons. They both work for Gringotts and until today lived at the Burrow. He and Fleur are now going to live here at the estate.”

“Now for the rest of my family,” Harry said. Neville and Susan looked confused. “When the last Lord Potter passed away, he left behind a concubine. When Sirius passed away, he left behind two. When I came into my inheritances, I came into them as well.”

There were bouts of laughter from several at the table.

“Harry,” Hermione said, “that was awful! Came into them as well! Just awful!”

“No pun intended,” Harry laughed when he realized what he said. “Professor McGonagall here is Minerva Grace McGonagall Potter. She’s been bound to the Lord Potter since bonding with my Great-grandfather in 1943. I bonded with her last Tuesday and she became my wife in all but law on Friday.”

“What’s that mean?” Neville asked.

“It means she love bonded with him, Neville,” Amber said. “It means she loves him in a way and made a vow to him to love him and he



accepted her that way. The nature of the love need not be romantic for the bond to take hold, but tends to become that way afterwards. It also means she's no longer really a Concubine. Legally she still is, but the nature of the bond and relationship is more like that of a Consort."

"Oh." Amber would know, Neville thought. Does she want that from me? Would Susan allow it?

"Here at the Estate, you may call her Minerva or Minnie. Both are acceptable."

"Yet you and Hermione still will not call me Minnie," Minerva chuckled. Harry tried to ignore the dig.

"This lovely lady," Harry continued, "is Dr. Healer Mallory Michelle Grant Black. She's been Sirius's concubine since 1974 and his wife in all but law since 1980. I bonded with her last Tuesday as well and she too is now my wife in all but law.

"This vision is Nymphadora Tonks Black. Of course, you call her by her given first name at your own risk. Everyone here calls her Dora. She was Sirius's as well and I bonded with her last Monday. She is an Auror and is also now my wife in all but law.

"Finally these two lovelies," Harry said. "You probably know of Daphne here and the other is her younger sister Astoria. The Death Eaters forced their father to sell them to Lord Black last week. Of course, we think they thought that Lord Black was Malfoy."

"No doubt Malfoy thinks that as well," Neville added.

"Well, Hermione convinced me to take them in. This is Daphne Renee Greengrass Black and Astoria Lynn Greengrass Potter. I bonded with them on Friday and Daphne was the first of these ladies to become my wife in all but law, followed immediately by her sister and then the others."

“And here I was worried that two women was a bit much,” Neville laughed. “I’m sorry Susan. I should not have been so stubborn about Amber. I will bond with her if you want me to.”

“And I do, Neville.”

“This is Amber Selma Harker,” Neville said. “For years, I knew her as my Nanny, my teacher and tutor and friend. Before leaving for Hogwarts, I was told she was my Dad’s Concubine. As I am now Lord Longbottom, she can be mine. Amber, I will bind you to me if that’s what you want.”

Amber could only nod vigorously.

After the introductions were made, dinner was served to everyone. Luna barely ate or said anything the entire time. Harry and Hermione were both very concerned for their friend. The conversation was as light as it could be given the events of the day. Mostly, it was jokes at Harry’s expense about managing a Harem. When the dinner ended, Remus, Bill, Fleur, Kingsley and Moody left. Mallory took Luna to what would be her room for now and gave her some potions to make her feel a little better and get a good, long night’s sleep. Amber was treated to a tour of the Manor from the Greengrass sisters while Minerva and Dora relaxed in the Library with a book.

Harry, Hermione, Neville and Susan remained in the Great Room and talked. It was mostly Susan and Hermione and much of it dealt with what had happened to the Potters over the last several days. Neville learned that Dumbledore could not be trusted, especially when it came to Harry and himself and that anyone truly loyal to Dumbledore could not be trusted either, and this included at least three of the Weasleys. Bill did not trust Dumbledore and neither did Fleur and the way Bill’s mother was treating them, well that’s why they moved to the Estate. Bill and Fleur were married in the eyes of the law and magic, yet Molly Weasley did not see it that way and insisted they sleep in separate rooms. Hermione was convinced that Molly was hoping Bill would end the relationship.

Neville also learned that Harry and Hermione would not be attending Hogwarts again. Neither would any witch under Harry's House or protection. Their education would continue under the supervision of the older witches and wizards who were here tonight. They would also train and might well be able to qualify as Aurors, if they wanted to, in a couple of years if not sooner. Neville and Susan decided to join them. The Longbottoms had been allied with the Potters since the days of the Round Table. If Hogwarts was not good enough for the Potters, it was not good enough for the Longbottoms either. All Neville and Susan asked was that someone bring their family possessions to the Estate, and that task would begin in the morning under the competent skills of the Potter Elves.

The conversation then turned to concubines.

"You had sex with all those women?" Neville asked.

"Yup," Harry said somewhat smugly. "Usually at least once a day."

"And today?"

"Let's see," Harry said, "Dora and Daphne slept with me last night so they got a Harry Wake Up Call this morning. Actually, they attacked me. It was more them waking me up again and again. I must have done well by them because they did me again during our shower."

"Why weren't you with Harry?" Susan asked Hermione.

"Usually I would be but I'm having my period right now so I told Harry to share his bed with the others. When it's over, it'll be back to Harry, me and our witch of the night."

"You allow other women in bed with you and Harry?"

"Of course. While I would love to have Harry all to myself, I'm not about to deny the others some semblance of a life and that means sleeping with their man, as Harry is their man too."

“And you’re okay with this?”

“I am not okay with the whole idea of concubines, Susan. I think it’s disgusting! But Harry had to take on Minerva, Mallory and Dora otherwise they would have to have been sold to goodness knows who. Since I knew Harry would treat them decently, I thought it was best for them to remain his. Then, when we learned what the Death Eaters had planned for Daphne and Astoria, well I couldn’t let Harry not do something about that as well. You should have seen how happy they were when they learned they had been sold to Harry and not Malfoy. They still were not happy about the fact that they had been sold, but.. Besides, it’s fun watching Harry make one of the other girls toes curl.”

“She likes it when the others are watching her too,” Harry chuckled.

“Girl sex?”

“Girl sex?” Neville asked.

“I’ll tell you later,” Susan replied.

“No,” Hermione said. “At least not that I know of. Daphne and Astoria are teens, but so far Harry has met theirs and my needs without problems. Still, it may be in our near future. I’m not opposed to the idea, I just haven’t done it. There were few I felt close enough to trust with that before. Now? We’ll see. He won’t order them to, will you Dear?”

“Nope,” Harry said. “Haven’t had to order them to do anything to or with me. They all seem quite eager for their daily or more Harry time.”

“Besides, Harry is quite capable of wearing any one woman out. He did me our first day, we made love ten times on the day I became his Consort. It’s a lot harder to wear out six.”

“Where do you do it?”

“Aside from his bedroom, well it can be just about anywhere. Usually it’s in the dining room, Great Room or Library. Some of us are researching things, so Harry can always find a witch in need of a break in the Library and it’s convenient when we’re busy for there to be a Harry time before and after meals, and sometimes during. I think most of us prefer the Library during the day, but that’s probably because Harry bonded each of us to him there and three of us lost our virginity there.”

“You held all bondings in the same place?”

Hermione nodded. “And whenever possible all of us were there. I think it makes us all feel more connected than might otherwise be the case.”

“Interesting idea,” Susan said. “We should try that, Nev.”

“Suze, we should not go back to the Manor...”

“No, but I’m sure we could find something similar here.”

“Anything for you, Love.”

“What about children?” Susan asked.

“Harry and I will not deny any of my sisters that right,” Hermione said. “And I do consider them my sisters. Four have already asked and received permission to have children. Astoria wants to wait a bit, and had she asked, Harry might have said no for now.”

“Any woman who has taken their O.W.L.s in my Houses will not be denied permission at all,” Harry said. “Those who have not, may be denied until they do. I would not be a bit surprised if Astoria asked the night after her last exam.”

“Especially if Daphne is or already has been pregnant,” Hermione agreed.

“And you, Hermione?” Susan asked.

“I hope to be pregnant before the summer is over.”

“And what do you think of this, Harry?”

“I have no problems with it - yet,” Harry said. “I might change my mind if there’s too much hormones about. Still, I won’t deny them. Sirius said that despite everything I should try and have a life. That means a family and that means children. Am I ready to be a Dad? I don’t know. Then again, is anyone really? I know I can provide for them and I know here they can be safe and have a happy childhood. Honestly, the thought of all of my lovely women having children... They’ll never be lonely and always have someone to play with, the children that is.”

“And who will be the heir?” Neville asked.

“Hermione’s son - should she have one - will be the next Lord Potter. I hope to find a woman who wants me and wants to be my Consort for the Black line...”

“I’m sure Ginny Weasley would love to volunteer,” Susan giggled.

“I’m sure she would too,” Harry agreed remembering that while they had told Neville and Susan about their trust issues with the Weasleys, they had not told them of the plot. “But there are reasons why that will never happen. For now, I’ll leave it at that.”

“We are actually hoping for someone else,” Hermione said.

“Who?”

“Luna.”

“Really?”

Hermione nodded. "She's my best girl friend and has been for a couple of years. She likes Harry and is not one of those Harry Potter Fan girls. She likes the real Harry, the one she considers a close friend."

"When you mentioned I could have two Consorts," Harry said, "she smiled for the first and only time tonight. But the decision is hers to make. I will not even make her an offer in that regard. But if she asks..."

"You don't find her a little off?" Neville asked. "Don't get me wrong, I think she's a lovely person. Still..."

"She's never 'Loony' Lovegood when it's just me and her," Harry said.

"Same with me and her," Hermione agreed. "I think that's a defense mechanism. There's a lot of pain in her past and she'd rather not feel that feel pain again. She puts up that front to keep people away and feel safe. But it comes down when she trusts you. The real Luna is quite a different person, although she still believes in things without proof."

"Not necessarily a bad thing," Harry added. "With her as my Black Consort, I would have two brilliant and beautiful women keeping me in line. One would assail me with logic and the other with philosophy. It would be a perfect combination."

The conversation continued for at least another hour before Neville and Susan began to fade. It had, after all, been a long day for each of them. Harry and Hermione led them to their room for the evening, before they too headed off to their bedrooms for the night.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Lord Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom, age 15 (Born 7/30/80).

Lady Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (2/24/80) (Hu-5); CONSORT OF LORD LONGBOTTOM (7/1/96).



## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE:

### HOUSE LONGBOTTOM

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1996 - Potter Manor

Neville was still a little stunned by what Susan had told him last night. Here it was the morning after. Susan lay sleeping in his arms and it was, he thought, the most pleasant experience in his life. In her arms, the horrors of yesterday melted away and he hoped it had been the same for her. They had a good cry together for their loss, and consoled each other for hours. She was really special, he thought. How could he be this lucky to have such a wonderful woman as his wife and consort? He smiled as he thought that had anyone told him a week ago he would be married, he would have thought them insane. Had they said Susan would be his bride, though, well there was no one else out there was there? He liked other girls, but Susan had always been different. Was it love at first sight, he wondered. They had, after all, been together in some way since the day they first met.

She had told him about what witches her age had to do to help their magic. She had been very careful in telling him, but very thorough as well. By the time she finished, he knew she had to have sex not out of lust or love but to help her magic grow with her so she could be the witch she was born to be. Sexual frustration for an adolescent witch led to all kinds of problems, worst being the loss of her magic altogether. Young witches eased that frustration two to three times a day on average. What stunned Neville was that many young witches chose to allow other witches to ease their frustration. For many, it was less awkward than doing it alone and Susan admitted the physical intimacy was nice and made it easier. It was called "Girl Sex," Susan told him and it was called that for a reason. The need for frequent physical release was unique to immature witches. Once they reached full maturity, the need would end. Her Auntie had told her that while she might find the idea of physical intimacy with another girl appealing now, it would never equal or replace her desire for a boy. Once she was mature, she would no longer find she had interest in Girl Sex at all. When this would happen varied. Typically, a girl reached their full maturity between the ages of twenty and twenty

five; although the girl could reach it as early as eighteen if she gave birth to a child (which, of course, required a boy).

Susan had girl partners. She did not lust after girls or crush on them. Her fantasies revolved around one boy, him. When a girl was pleasuring her, she imagined it was Neville and that made the whole thing even more intense. She did admit it was fun to pleasure another girl. It was more fun doing the same for her one true love, Neville. She had told him that her usual partner was Hannah Abbott; a girl Neville thought was quite pretty. At school and when she was home with her Auntie, Hannah could come around for their daily sessions of girl sex. What really stunned Neville was Susan's admission that when she was visiting him at Longbottom Manor, she and Amber would be together for her therapy, as she called it. She had insisted that he bond with Amber, for all that Amber had done for him and for what she had done for her. Amber didn't need it for herself, but knew that Susan did and what was best for Susan was best for Neville, which was what she had been bonded to ensure.

Susan told Neville she had a private talk with Hermione. It was about the arrangements in her House. The reasons really did not apply to Neville as he was not the Head of two houses, but the specific bonding rites in Harry's house were described. Susan wanted Neville to at least consider sort of relationship with Amber has Harry's concubines enjoyed with him, to include children if she asked. Neville was surprised when he realized this did not bother him in the least.

Neville had already made his mind up about bonding with Amber before he and Susan spoke. Whatever she wanted, he would do. But he somehow knew if for no other reason than they both had seen how happy Harry's Concubines seemed, that she would probably insist he take Amber in. He had a moment alone while she showered the night before when he was able to speak with Bandy, the male Elf placed in charge of seeing to the needs of Longbottom House while they were at the Estate. He and asked Bandy if there was a secluded lake nearby where he and his girls could enjoy a quite day and picnic together. There was one, about a half mile walk from the Manor along a horse path through the woods. He then asked if there were horses as there had been at Longbottom Manor. Amber had taught him to ride and later he had taught Susan and he thought a horse ride

followed by a picnic under a large tree by the lake and all the love making he hoped would accompany it would be perfect. There was a stable and he made arrangements for three horses and a picnic lunch to be ready for him and his family in the morning. He had yet to tell Susan, but hoped she would like the surprise.

Neville lay there with Susan in his arms, thinking about all that happened and luxuriating in the sweet smell from her luscious red hair and the feel of her softness and warmth against him. He heard her sigh contentedly and felt her shift. He felt her lips against his and pulled her close as he let the kiss deepen. She broke the kiss and he opened his eyes seeing her beautiful face so near to him.

“Good morning, my Husband,” she whispered.

“Good morning, my Bride,” he replied. “Sleep well.”

“Mmmmm,” she sighed laying her head down on his chest again. “Wonderfully. You?”

“Never better with you in my arms, Love.”

“I love you, Nev.”

“I love you too.”

“So are you awake,” she almost giggled.

“I guess so.”

“Make love to me?”

Who was Neville to deny Susan anything?

Neville and Susan joined Amber outside their rooms around eight that morning. They were all dressed in the same clothes from the day before, but it did not really matter as the Elves had freshly laundered them during the night. They followed the smells back to the dining

room where a large breakfast buffet had been laid out. Neville saw Professor McGonagall, Hermione, and the two Greengrass sisters were already eating as they arrived and Luna was slowly picking through the buffet.

“Where’s Harry,” Neville asked.

“In the kitchen cooking,” Hermione replied.

“Why’s he doing that?”

“He likes to.”

“And we’re here,” Astoria said, “cause we’re not allowed to help.”

“Besides, the food is marvelous,” Daphne said, “much better than Hogwarts.”

Luna said nothing as she left the buffet with a plate full of her breakfast favorites.

As Neville piled his plate with eggs, bacon, sausages, toast, breakfast potatoes and kippers he asked: “So where are the other two - um...?”

“Mallory and Dora,” Susan added helping her occasionally memory challenged husband.

“Mallory is in London,” Hermione replied. “She’s doing something for Harry. Dora is away arranging the transfer of the Bones and Longbottom possessions to the Estate.”

As they were sitting down, Harry arrived from the kitchen with a platter of pastries that he placed on the table. Neville watched as Harry went through the buffet, unable to say anything because the food was really good.

“So Neville,” Hermione asked, “any plans for today?”

“I think my girls and I could use a little alone time after...” Neville began. It was as close as anyone came to discussing the attacks from the day before. Luna ate in silence and the others discussed things that were less painful. Harry, it seemed was going to tour more of the Duchy today. Daphne and Astoria were planning a shopping trip to Pottersport. Professor McGonagall was heading to Hogwarts to work on course outlines for the upcoming year. It was during her discussion that Neville learned she was retiring from Hogwarts and the course outlines were for Harry, Hermione and the Greengrass sisters and not for her position at school. Neville and Susan were invited to attend as well and eagerly agreed as they both knew it might not be safe for them to leave the Duchy for some time.

After breakfast was over, Neville led Susan and Amber out of the Manor and following the directions he received towards the stables. He arrived and found three horses saddled and ready to go and a large picnic basket as well. His idea of a peaceful ride to a lake and private picnic earned him a long kiss of gratitude from his bride.

Neville was a little concerned as he and the others slowly rode down the horse path towards the forest ahead. He wondered whether the events of the day before would haunt them as they rode amongst the trees and was relieved when both women seemed relaxed as they rode through the forest. He guessed that the path and the fact that they were much further south such that the trees were very different worked in a way that the memories did not come flooding back.

After what Neville believed was about a half a mile, the path reached an opening in the trees. Before them was a large lake, just as he had been told there would be. Neville picked up the pace into a trot hoping to find a large shade tree where he and the others could enjoy the day. It did not take him long to find one that he thought was perfect. His ladies were right behind him. They dismounted and removed the tack from the three horses. Neville had been told that the horses would return when called or when it was time to head back for dinner that evening; otherwise they would be grazing in the grassy field that bordered the lake.

As soon as the horses moved off, Neville and his girls kicked off their shoes. Amber attended to the picnic basket and began spreading

blankets on the ground while Susan drew Neville into a long, passionate kiss. Neville had felt nervous about what was going to happen. He was going to make love to Susan with Amber nearby and then bond with Amber with Susan watching. Whatever nerves he was feeling was gone the moment his lips met Susan's.

They slowly undressed each other as they continued to kiss, their hands exploring each other as they had the day before. Shirts, a bra, jeans and Susan's knickers were soon tossed away and Neville laid Susan onto one of the blankets intent on suckling her delectable breasts. She moaned with pleasure as he began doing just that. Emboldened by her very favorable response, his hand parted her legs and he began working her towards release, her hips responding immediately and thrusting into his hand. Neville could tell she was very aroused and probably would climax quickly. His fingers were soaked almost from the moment he touched her sex. Her moans louder and her breath increasingly ragged, he drove his fingers into her. Moments later, she moaned his name and when rigid as the pleasure reached its apex.

Neville had completely forgotten that Amber was close by. He was reminded when Susan removed his shorts and he heard a gasp that was not from his Consort. Neville looked over and hoped that the surprised expression on Amber's face was a good thing as he felt Susan's mouth surround him and take him in.

Neville lay there sometime later. He had rewarded Susan for her wonderful efforts in kind and then made love to her...or was it the other way around? For their first time, Susan had been on top and largely in control. Not that Neville had minded one bit. As she rode him, he was able to look into her beautiful face and caress her stunning body and watch her pleasure build to release and then build to release again. His beautiful angel now lay snuggled into his side with her red, sweet smelling hair brushing his face as his chest, upon which that perfect head lay, rose and fell. He had forgotten all about the day before and, for that matter, all about the fact that Amber had been there the whole time.

A soft kiss on his cheek that was not nestled in Susan's hair caused him to remember reality. He turned his head and a soft pair of lips

found his. He knew it was not Susan as she still was relaxing at his other side. The kiss was loving and tender and not at all what Neville was expecting. When it broke, he missed it if only for a moment and he opened his eyes to see Amber smiling down at him.

“Neville, Darling,” Amber said softly. “You are going to bond with me, aren’t you?”

Neville nodded.

“Then there are a few things I want to say and to tell you before we begin.”

“Why?”

“I want you to know without a doubt that what I say is of my own free will and not as a result of the magic of the bond. Can you accept that?”

Neville nodded and soon felt her soft lips against his again.

“First,” she continued, “can I ask you a question?”

Neville nodded.

“Why here?”

“This tree, the lake, the forest,” Neville said, “it’s a lot like where Susan and I bonded. Better even.”

“Better?” Susan whispered.

“No Death Eaters,” Neville replied. “Harry and Hermione have a bonding place: a place where she bonded with him and where he bonded with each of the others; a place special to all of them because of that. I wanted a place like that as well. It is to show you, Amber, that while Susan is my love and life, you are no less important or special to me.”

“Thank you,” Amber replied with a hitch in her voice and tears on her cheeks. Before Neville could ask her what was wrong, she was kissing him again which told him he probably had said the right thing.

“Neville,” she said when she finally sat back from an amazing kiss, “I love you.”

Neville’s jaw dropped. “In - in what way?”

“I’ve known you your whole life. I’ve changed your nappies, fed you, and held you when you cried. I’ve watched you grow and never once believed your Gran when she said you were probably a squib. I always knew you were a powerful wizard in the making and did my best to help you see that too. I was your teacher. Taught you to read and write and dream. I am your friend. I watched you head off to school for the first time and saw you grow each time you came home to me. I watched you grow into the wonderful young man you are now. I’d like to think I had a hand in it.”

Neville could only nod.

“I - I tell you this, Neville, so that you know. The Concubine bond is usually involuntary on the witch’s part. She has no choice, really. I have no choice. But I want you to know, this is my will. I want to be yours forever! I want this, Neville. I want to be bound to you!”

“You do?”

“You have a huge heart, Neville,” Amber said as she placed a hand on his chest, “a huge heart. I know Susan owns a large chunk of it and all, but there’s room for me to claim a bit for myself as well. A piece of it is more than most women deserve, Neville. It’s more than I deserve.”

“Amber,” Neville said, “what are you saying?”

“I can be happy as your Concubine,” Amber replied. “I want a chance to be happy.”



“A love bond?”

Amber nodded. Neville did not know what to say.

“Say yes, Dear,” Susan said.

“Okay,” he said to Amber and Susan both.

“Thanks,” Amber said. “I’d also like babies,” she added.

Neville gaped at her.

“Nev,” Susan said, “I’m probably going to be pregnant in the next few weeks. Consorts can be that way. Say yes.”

“Okay. Babies then.” Neville actually felt relaxed this time when Amber kissed him. He knew it was because he did have feelings for her but more importantly it was because Susan did not seem to mind.

“Finally,” Amber said with tears in her eyes, “did Susan tell you about us?”

Neville nodded. “She said it was a needs not lust thing.”

Amber nodded. “Still, it is fun. Would you mind terribly if we still do that?”

“I...”

“Could you at least let us and watch and decide?”

Neville nodded. “Susan?” he asked.

“Say yes,” she said.

“Okay.”

“Since I see you are ready,” Amber said looking at Neville’s natural reaction, “then I am too.”

Neville nodded. “Amber Selma Harker,” he said firmly, “I, Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom, take you as my Concubine...” A few minutes later, and Neville knew that Amber was one sexy woman.

Hours later, the three were riding back to the Manor. Amber was now bound to him and had Love Bonded as well and had permission to carry his children. They had their picnic lunch in the nude and had made love or had sex - Neville was not sure of the difference if there was one with these two lovely women - several times. Girl sex was a huge turn on and Neville had done his part from the beginning as two had become three in a way. He was certain Harry and the others would know what had happened. ‘His Girls’ were sporting very goofy grins of thoroughly sated witches and he knew his face mirrored theirs. He did not care.

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1996 - St. Mungo’s Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries, London U.K.

At ten in the morning, Mallory entered St. Mungo’s Hospital in London on a mission. It was a mission that Harry had assigned to her literally at the crack of dawn that morning. There was something Mallory wanted to tell Harry, something she learned last night before she went to bed, but when Harry and that night’s bedmates Minerva and Astoria explained what Harry needed, Mallory knew her news could wait. This was more important.

She learned that Neville’s parents were in St. Mungo’s in the James Thickey Ward. She knew this ward was for patients undergoing ‘long term care.’ In reality, the residents of this ward were suffering from what had been deemed permanent afflictions. Few if any would ever leave a hospital again. She had spent two months on the ward while training to be a Healer. It was, in her mind, the most depressing place she had ever seen. The patients were all deemed incurable cases and what really aggravated her was that no one seemed interested in trying to find a cure for their afflictions. The ward was staffed with only a single Healer whose responsibility was merely to monitor the health

of the patients. What care the patients actually received was delegated to nurses and orderlies.

When Harry went to bed last night, the thoughts about Neville and his parents plagued him. He could barely sleep and Minerva and Astoria helped him reach a decision and come up with both the plan and means to make the plan work. He was going to have Neville's parents transferred to Mistress Agnes Hospital where, he hoped, they would receive better care and where Neville could visit them safely. Through his witches, Harry learned that his Head of and allied House, he could assume guardianship over the Longbottoms until such time as Neville requested that role. Mallory was given two sets of documents that morning. The first were the guardianship papers which she was to take to Gringotts for authentication and registration. Harry wanted it done as soon as the doors opened at eight so that there was no chance anyone else could file before he did. The second set of documents were the actual transfer orders which Mallory as a Healer had to countersign. Both the guardianship papers and the transfer order named "The Duke of Charenwell" as the person assuming custody over the Longbottoms. This was part of a larger subterfuge to keep Wizarding Britain ignorant as to the status and whereabouts of Harry at least until the reading of Sirius's Will in less than two weeks.

Mallory's first stop was at the Hospital Administrator's office to present the papers. Once they were verified, a separate set of documents was signed discharging the Longbottoms to Mallory's care. She then requested to review the Longbottom's medical records. The first pages covered the initial tests and diagnosis performed the day the couple was admitted on November 17, 1981. The two had been attacked by Death Eaters and subjected to prolonged exposure to the Cruciatus Curse which had left them in a near catatonic state. While this was not particularly unusual, the fact that they had remained in that state was very strange. In most all cases she was aware of, the patient recovered in a few days or weeks at the most. Those that did not recover died. Here, after three weeks the Longbottoms were transferred to long term care and forgotten. There were no follow-up evaluations or even any indication that any Healer suspected that something else might be the cause of their condition. Yet another reason she was glad she no longer worked here.

She placed the records in her bag. Although they were probably of little use to her, she still needed them to open the file back in Pottersport. She then went to check on her new patients and perform the first true physical that either had had in years in order to determine that it was safe to move them.

Mallory entered the James Thickey Ward a little after eleven. She reported to the Healer on call and showed him the paperwork. He gave her a bored nod and told her where the Longbottoms were located. He made no move to help her or show her around, not that she was surprised. The indifference in this ward was endemic and had not changed since she was a Healer in Training. Fortunately, the Ward was well organized and she was able to find her new charges with ease. They shared a screened off cubical and had for years. She entered and what she saw was not what the medical records and charts she had skimmed had told her to expect. The couple was sitting up on their beds and speaking to each other in low and hoarse voices. According to the records, they were supposed to be nearly catatonic and certainly uncommunicative. Something had happened, and it confirmed her suspicion of misdiagnosis. The couple turned to her. They were both extremely thin and gaunt, a product of fourteen years on a mostly liquid diet and being practically bedridden.

“Good morning,” Mallory said, “I am Healer Grant.”

“Morning,” they both croaked.

“Where are we?” the man asked.

“St. Mungo’s,” was all Mallory said in reply. She could tell they were both very confused and disoriented. It was understandable under the circumstances. “But that’s only for a few more minutes, I hope.”

“We’re going home?” the woman asked.

“Not just yet,” Mallory said as she started casting diagnostic spells to ensure they were fit to travel as well as determine what treatment they may need upon arrival. “You’re being transferred to another facility that I believe will offer you better treatment.”

“We have a baby at home,” Mrs. Longbottom protested. “He needs us.”

“I have been assured he’s being cared for,” Mallory replied.

“What happened to us?”

“I’m sure you have a lot of questions and I will see to it that they are answered, but later. First things first: transfer and a full medical work up. Can you stand?”

They both could with some difficulty. Mallory stood between them and held them up. “Okay, I’ve determined it’s safe to transport. Here we go!”

Without any sensation at all, the scene shifted from the dark and depressing long term care ward at St. Mungo’s to a brightly lit room. Mallory called this type of travel jumping. Dora called it shifting. In reality it had no name as to name it formally would have been deemed as giving a concubine status and recognize that they had an ability other witches and wizards did not. Having traveled that way before, Frank Longbottom now knew that this Healer was a Concubine of someone’s. What puzzled him was why she was willing to reveal it.

They were standing in front of a reception desk of some sort and there was a young woman seated there. Both the Longbottoms began to lose the strength to stand and Mallory had to hold them up.

“Little help?” she asked and the young woman looked up.

“Healer Grant?” she said, then noticed the two people she was trying to hold up. A wand came out and two wheelchairs appeared just behind the Longbottoms and the young witch got up to help Mrs. Longbottom into one of the chairs while Mallory attended to Mr. Longbottom.

“What do we have here?” the witch said as she returned to her desk.

Mallory reached into her bag and took out the papers and files. "By order of the Duke, patient transfer from St. Mungo's. Who's the On Call?"

"Healer Dade," the witch replied. "I'll get him."

"Thanks, Stephanie," Mallory said as the witch left and headed down the hall at a trot.

"Where are we?" Frank Longbottom asked.

"Mistress Agnes Hospital, Pottersport," Mallory replied.

"Where?"

"Later. I know the two of you either have or will have a thousand questions. Our priority is to get you checked out and return you to your son as soon as possible, okay?"

Frank merely nodded in reply.

A tall man in Healer robes entered the room just ahead of Stephanie.

"What have we here, Mallory?" the man asked.

"Patient transfer."

"Yes, Steph did say that. These their records?" he asked indicating the large files.

"Yes Jeff," Mallory replied. "As you will see they were clearly misdiagnosed."

Jeff read through a few pages of the file. "Clearly," he agreed. "Recommendation?"

“Full work up, physical, magical and mental. We needn’t worry about the condition they were in I don’t think. Focus on their current condition. I also want a recommended course of treatment and, unless it is necessary, if they can be discharged today...”

“I understand,” Healer Dade said as two orderlies appeared. “Exam room three,” he told them and watched as the couple were wheeled away. “So what’s really going on Mal?”

“They were in long care. As you see, the diagnosis was prolonged exposure to the Crutiatius...”

“Obviously not. Fourteen and a half years?”

Mallory nodded.

“Idiots!”

Mallory nodded again.

“Do they know?”

“Don’t think so.”

“I would advise someone they know tell them.”

“I concur.”

“Is there anyone?”

“There is. That was why I recommended discharge today unless it is medically necessary to keep them here.”

“Where will you be?”

“Home. Call when you are finished.”

“Will do. Anything else?”

“I’m not sure if they’ve eaten.”

“I’ll take care of that.”

“Thanks Jeff.”

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1996 - Potter Manor

“So you’re saying they’re better?” Harry asked. Mallory had returned to the Manor and was eating lunch with Harry, Hermione, Minerva and the Greengrass sisters.

“Mentally? Probably,” Mallory said. “Physically they are emaciated and weak as a result of fourteen and a half years of relative inactivity and a liquid diet. It will take months for them to fully recover from that.”

“But how?”

“They were both misdiagnosed. While over exposure to the Crutiatius can lead to the state they were in, the patient either dies from physical shock or recovers within a few weeks. Whatever caused them to be catatonic for over fourteen years, it was not that curse.”

“I don’t understand,” Harry said. “I mean that curse hurts like hell.”

“You’ve been under it?”

“Twice.”

“Tell me Harry, aside from the pain, could you think clearly?”

“Yeah. Couldn’t do anything, but I was aware of what was going on around me. If I hadn’t been, Voldemort would have killed me for certain. Why?”



“The Crutiatus causes most if not all of a person’s pain receptors to fire at the same time,” Mallory said. “There are other curses that do something similar, but they’re not Unforgivable.”

“What’s the difference?”

“Simply put, your mind remains protected under the Crutiatus. It was designed so the victim would not lose their minds or pass out or otherwise avoid the pain. The victims cannot escape the spell which is why it’s so insidious. Yes, overexposure can cause what happened to Neville’s parents, but that is more from physical shock and exhaustion than mental injury. Even then, it usually takes days, even weeks for that to occur.”

“And they were only under it for a few hours,” Harry added.

“And yet they were left legally insane for years,” Mallory nodded. “There was something else going on. Odd that they recovered now.”

“Why?”

“I mean, it was only hours after Neville...”

“Oh my!” Hermione exclaimed. “Excuse me,” she said getting up. “I just remembered something I read recently!” With that she dashed out of the room.

“What was that about?” Astoria asked.

“Hermione probably read about a curse that fits the facts,” Harry said. “She’s off to the Library to double check.”

“Is she always like that?” Mallory asked.

“She has been that way practically since the day we met,” Harry chuckled. “Not that it matters, but does this have any effect on Neville’s status as Lord Longbottom?”

“No,” Daphne replied. “The title has passed to Neville and that is irrevocable.”

“How? Why?”

“Remember Harry,” Daphne explained, “some of the papers you executed this morning? One set claimed your right to exercise guardianship over them?”

Harry nodded.

“Well, as they are both of age, those papers were not worth the parchment they were written upon unless the Longbottoms had been declared legally incompetent and were under a guardianship prior to your filing of the papers.”

“They were,” Minerva said. “They were declared incompetent in December of ‘81. Lord Algicyrus Longbottom was named their guardian and when he passed away in ‘83, Augusta assumed the role.”

“And as that was a legal proceeding,” Daphne continued, “it cannot be revoked simply because the person regains their sanity. They must petition for release from the guardianship or their guardian must do so and the case must be reviewed and ruled upon by a court of competent jurisdiction. If you want conclusive proof, remember Neville was wearing the ring.”

“The ring?”

“A Head of House Ring cannot be worn by anyone other than the Head of House. Once it passes to a new Head, it can only pass on to the younger generation. It can never pass back.”

“ So when Neville’s Gran was killed and Neville was emancipated...?”

“Neville became Lord Longbottom,” Daphne finished. “His father, by virtue of his status, was cut from the chain of succession.”

“You sure?” Harry asked innocently.

Daphne picked that up. He was not questioning her knowledge or integrity. “Harry,” she said, “while my family may not be pureblood supremacists and while we loath that philosophy, we are still an old and respected House. My sisters were taught customs and practice of society from the start. I am sure that Neville is unquestionably Lord Longbottom.”

Harry chuckled.

“What?” Daphne asked.

“I knew taking you and your sister in would come in handy.”

Daphne smiled with appreciation. “Glad to help.”

At around three that afternoon, Mallory had returned to the hospital to check on the Longbottoms. While they were not given a clean bill of health, there was no really good reason why they could not be discharged. They were both weak and grossly underweight from a combination of years of inactivity and a liquid diet and their magic was weak as well from lack of used or mental stimulation. Mentally, they were fine if confused, but that was to be expected. Their condition would take weeks to improve, but nothing that a healthy and robust diet, increased physical and mental activity and a load of potions could not cure. A couple of potions would allow them to walk normally and for an acceptable period of time without fatigue which would help their muscles develop again and would allow them to be independent to a large extent. Still, they were cautioned to take it easy for the first few days. They were discharged to Mallory's care - the main reason why they were not held over as Healer Dade probably would not have discharged them if there was not a Healer in residence where they were going.

The Longbottoms had not been told much. To them, one minute they were being tortured and the next they were awake in St. Mungo's each much thinner and looking like death warmed over. They were still a little disoriented when Mallory jumped them into the Sitting Room in the Private Apartments of the Manor. They were asked to sit in a love seat and did as they were asked, each hoping someone would tell them what was really going on. A magical being neither had ever seen before offered them glasses of pumpkin juice which they accepted.

"I'd offer something stronger," she said, "but Dr. Grant says you're not ready."

Healer or Dr. Grant had already left them alone, saying she had to go and find their hosts.

"What's going on, Frank?" Alice Longbottom asked.

"No idea," Frank growled. "If I didn't know that James Potter was dead and that traitor Sirius Black in prison, I'd say this was one of their pranks. That being said, this might be a Death Eater trick."

"I'm not so sure," Alice replied. "Seems to be a bit much. I mean, they had us, didn't they?"

Frank nodded.

"How long?" Alice asked, "how long were we out?"

"Seemed like no more than a few hours," Frank said. "By the looks of you and from what that Healer Dade said, I think it was longer."

Alice nodded. "Much longer, I fear."

The door to the room opened and they saw the Healer they knew as Mallory enter with an older woman, a very young woman and young man. The young woman they did not recognize. They did recognize the other two.

“Professor McGonagall?” Alice asked. “James? It can’t be! We were told you were dead!”

The three women took seats opposite from the Longbottoms while Harry walked up to them. He looked Alice straight in the eye and held out his hand. She saw his eyes and her jaw dropped open. “You must be Alice,” the young man said. “We met once before, but you weren’t you then. It is a pleasure to finally meet the real you.” Alice was too stunned to reply.

Harry then offered his hand to Frank. “And you must be Frank. Welcome to our home.” Frank was also too confused to respond and barely noticed when the young man let go of his hand and took another seat opposite them.

“You’re not James?” Alice asked.

“No,” the young man replied. “But no worries. I get that all the time.”

“Who are you?” Frank asked.

“Harry Potter,” the young man replied. Harry watched as Neville’s parents tried to process this information. It was several seconds before either of them could speak.

“You can’t be,” Alice protested. “You can’t be James and Lily’s boy! He’s the same age as Neville and Neville is only a baby!”

“We were all babies once,” the young man said.

Frank figured it out first. “How long?” he asked. “What day is it? What year?”

“Today is Tuesday, the Second of July, 1996,” Harry replied.

Alice’s hands covered her face and she was clearly crying. “Fifteen years?”

“Fourteen and a half,” Harry said, “approximately.”

“And our Neville?”

“Is fine,” Harry said. “My friend Neville is spending the summer with us. He’s out on the grounds now.”

“Can we see him?”

“Most certainly, but later,” there was an air of command in Harry’s voice. “There are things we need to discuss first before your joyous reunion.”

“What happened to us?” Frank asked, still trying to process the assault of information.

“That is indeed one of two things we need to discuss,” Harry said. “The other of course being what has happened since you’ve been away. Mallory?”

“Mr. and Mrs. Longbottom, to be frank we are perplexed. You were admitted to St. Mungo’s in 1981 in a catatonic state following prolonged exposure to the Crutiatius Curse. You both remained in that state until this morning.”

“That’s not possible,” Frank said. “The curse does not do that! A few weeks, maybe, but over fourteen years?”

“Hence, the reason we are perplexed. Hermione?”

“I’m Harry’s Consort Hermione, by the way,” the young woman said. The Longbottoms knew that Harry was not yet sixteen. This woman did not look much older at all. They were far too young, but the Longbottoms decided to keep quiet about this for now.

“We suspect you were hit by a different curse just before you blacked out,” Hermione said. “What can you recall?”

“It was Tuesday, November 17th,” Frank replied. “We were having a relatively normal work day, given the need to round up all of Voldemort’s supporters. Our son was with my Mum for the day and we had returned home for lunch. Just as we were getting ready to return to the Ministry, four Death Eaters broke through our Wards and attacked us.”

“Do you remember who they were?” Hermione asked. She knew the answer but was subtly testing their recollection.

“Bellatrix Lestrange, her husband Rodolphus, his brother Rastaban and a fourth one. I don’t recall his name.”

“Barty Crouch,” Harry growled.

“No,” Frank said. “I’m pretty sure I would have remembered if my Department Head was one of the attackers.”

“It was his son,” Harry explained.

Frank’s eyebrows went up for a moment before he continued. “Alice and I gave them a good fight for a while hoping back-up would arrive but my guess is they disabled the warning wards. They got a couple of lucky shots in and disarmed us. They then began taking turns torturing us. Two of them would hold us under the Cruciatus while the other two asked us for any information regarding the whereabouts of Harry Potter. We didn’t know. Nobody did. They didn’t believe us.”

“How long?”

“Three, four hours at the most. The sun had just set when I blacked out.”

“Try to remember what happened just before you blacked out,” Hermione said.

Frank thought for a moment. “Bellatrix was torturing me. I guess that kid was torturing Alice because I could see and hear the other two and they weren’t doing it. I heard someone say ‘Aurors’ and the curse

was removed. She still had her wand on me and seemed to mutter something and that's it."

"Alice?"

"She hit me with something next. No idea what. Couldn't hear the incantation."

"And the next thing you remember was waking up this morning?"

They both nodded.

"From your perspective, how much time did you think had elapsed?"

"A few hours at the most," Frank answered.

"I thought as much," Hermione said. "It was a Black spell."

"Clearly it was dark magic," Frank began.

"No," Hermione said, "a Black spell as in the family Black."

"What do you mean?" Frank asked.

"The Blacks had their own spells, as well as very detailed notes about other dark spells," Hermione said.

"And how do you know this?"

"Harry inherited the Black library," Hermione replied. "Included in that collection were about thirty magical journals written by past Lord Blacks and cross-referenced. It would seem that historically Blacks have not been potioners as, with the exception of Phinues Nigellus's journal, the potions references are rudimentary at best. But as spell casters and warders, that's another story. Any dark spell you've ever heard of and many you have not are described in detail. Moreover, at least a few of the Blacks were spell crafters. It was a Black that invented the Crutiatius Curse which they shared with like minded



witches and wizards. But there were some really nasty spells they never shared. One of them was the spell that Bellatrix used on the Longbottoms."

"And I've take it you've read these journals?" Frank asked.

"Not cover to cover, no," Hermione replied. "I noticed the referencing when we were cataloging the Black library and decided to check it out. I picked a curse I knew of - the Crutiatius and skimmed the references to it in several journals. That referencing led me to a custom Black curse designed to mimic over exposure to the Crutiatius Curse.

"The spell was invented over three hundred years ago. The most recent entries were by Orion Black, who experimented with it back in the '70's. He found out that what the spell does is block all higher brain functions and places them in magical stasis. The victim loses the ability to think, reason, remember, sense time, but still can respond to stimulus acting mainly on instinct and muscle memory. Basically, they are reduced to the intelligence level of a reptile.

"Previous Blacks had also experimented with the spell. Apparently, they wondered whether it could be countered after an incident in 1702 when a victim miraculously recovered. They soon found the spell was reversible to a limited degree."

"How?" Frank asked.

"First off, one Black who used his own daughter as a test subject found a counter-curse that the caster - and only the caster - could use to break the curse. Full recovery was almost instantaneous. The Blacks also learned that while the spell seemed permanent, the truth was if the caster died, it would be lifted within a half day or so."

"There are other spells that can do that," Frank noted.

Hermione nodded. "Six, to be exact. Four of which the damage to the brain is physical and permanent. The other two are well known to Aurors and their emergency medical teams and easily countered.

Mallory told me that the initial test done when you were admitted showed your brains appeared undamaged and yet you did not respond to the counters. We were discussing what happened to the two of you and I suddenly remembered the Black journals. Bellatrix was a Black. I figured she must have known about that spell.”

“So why didn’t she just kill us?” Alice asked. “It’s not like we could have stopped her at the time.”

“With Voldemort gone, the Ministry took the position that only the Killing Curse used post Voldemort would warrant the Dementor’s Kiss,” Hermione continued. “The Crutiatius still earned a life sentence, but you still lived and could hope that someone would bribe the right someone and you’d get a reprieve. By casting that curse, all they had on Bellatrix and the others was proof they used the Crutiatius.”

“Throw in Barty Crouch and there was serious incentive to sweep it all under the rug,” Minerva added. “The Ministry did not want to admit publicly that Death Eaters were still a threat and Dumbledore quietly instituted policies aimed at getting the at-large Death Eaters to come quietly. Bellatrix and her friends were the last to be tried and their trial was limited to their activities before Voldemort supposedly died. Your torture was not even a charge.”

“And what happened to the Death Eaters who did come quietly?” Frank growled.

“Found innocent by reason of the Imperious Curse to the man or woman,” McGonagall said, “including several who were original Death Eaters.”

“What the hell were we fighting for then,” Frank exclaimed.

“Dumbledore felt that with Voldemort gone it was best to allow sleeping dogs to lie,” Minerva replied.

“After all,” Hermione huffed, “why throw half the Purebloods in bloody prison? It’s not like Dumbledore or the rest of the Wizengamot wanted retribution for what happened to Muggles and Muggleborns!”

Frank Longbottom was livid and doing his best to control his temper. He and his wife had lost almost fifteen years of their lives and of their son's life because it was politically expedient not to do anything. Death Eaters walked free and unpunished because their government believed that it was prudent. This was not what he believed in nor was it why he and his wife became Aurors. Laws were made to be enforced and to uphold and protect the Greater Good, as Dumbledore had said. Apparently, that Greater Good did not include non-Purebloods! He was disgusted.

"So," Alice said, "any idea how we came out of it?" She was trying to quell her own rage that what they had been told. "I doubt Bellatrix would have..."

"Your son killed her yesterday afternoon," Harry said without any hint of emotion.

"WHAT?" the two Longbottoms exclaimed.

"Didn't she get life in prison?" Frank asked incredulously.

"She did," Harry replied. "If you're a Death Eater these days that does not seem to mean much."

"But Voldemort's dead," Alice protested. "He died that night when he killed Lily and James!"

"No he did not," Harry said gravely. "His body was destroyed, but he did not die."

"Horcrux?" Frank asked in horror.

"We think six," Harry nodded.

"Merlin's balls!"

"Frank!" Alice scolded.

“Voldemort’s back, isn’t he?” Frank said softly.

“I’ve had to fight him five times,” Harry said.

“Five? No one has...” Frank began. “You’re what? Sixteen?”

Harry shrugged. “I fought him five times in his various states. I destroyed him three times, if you include Godric’s Hollow,” Harry said. “The last two times, I only managed to draw. He’s back.”

For the next two hours Harry, helped at times by Hermione and Minerva, told the Longbottoms of the new world they had returned to. They told them of Harry’s very different career as a student. They told the Longbottoms of the Prophecy and how, until that Halloween night in 1981, Neville and Harry were both tied to the future of Voldemort. They told of Harry’s first year, culminating in his killing of his own professor who was possessed by Voldemort at the time. They told of the Chamber of Secrets Second Year and how an undersized twelve year old boy killed a twenty-meter long basilisk and defeated Riddle again. They told of Third Year and the innocence of Harry’s Godfather Sirius Black and Fourth Year and Voldemort’s return to a body. Then they told the Longbottoms of Fifth Year. Harry focused on their son and how he grew from a meek yet nice boy into a warrior and how he stood and took fire from the best Voldemort had to deploy - his inner circle.

“Was Neville hurt?” Alice asked.

“Broken nose and wand, that’s it. Didn’t stop him, though.”

“What do you mean?” Frank asked.

“He still had fists. Beat one of them senseless.”

“And what was the toll?”

“Eleven Death Eaters captured. Bellatrix escaped. Voldemort was injured although not fatally.”

“And you and your friends?”

“Hermione was touch and go. We all were injured but she was the only close call.”

“Wait, you’re telling us that six teens, none of whom were beyond O.W.L. levels took on Voldemort’s best, and Voldemort himself...”

“I was the only one of us who faced him,” Harry said.

“...and you won?”

“Fought them to a standstill,” Harry said. “Winning happened when others showed up. But Sirius was lost,” Harry sniffed. “He was the closest thing I had to a father. A lucky shot. Just a stunner from Bellatrix. He was right next to me. Fell the wrong way. Into the veil.”

Alice gasped.

“I’m sorry, Harry.”

“S’okay,” Harry said. “He wanted to fight. Just had bad luck.”

“And yesterday?”

Harry told the Longbottoms what he knew. When he finished, he could swear there was a look of awe and pride on their faces. Frank was saddened to learn his mother had died, but was proud to hear how his son had done in battle. His son. His son the warrior. His son had seen more than he had in some ways and had withstood a harder baptism of fire than he had. Frank’s first taste of combat was ten Aurors against two Death Eaters, two low level ones. His son was outnumbered two to one by Voldemort’s best. Frank was a fully trained Auror, six months into the job when he first stood in the line of battle. His son had only just finished taking his O.W.L.s hours before and went charging off into battle. A few weeks later, his son is again in battle and kills Voldemort’s top lieutenant. His son. Frank knew that when the history of this war was written, provided the right side won,

while Harry would figure prominently, Neville Longbottom would be right up there. His son.

His thoughts were interrupted.

“Neville?” he heard Alice gasp.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16(Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (3/22/63) (SI-5); Sold to Riley Hooch 7/20/78; sold to Frank Longbottom 4/28/80; CONCUBINE OF NEVILLE LONGBOTTOM (7/2/96).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: FAMILY REUNION

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 1996 - Potter Manor

From Alice Longbottom's perspective, yesterday had been November 17, 1981. Yesterday, she woke up and found her darling fifteen month old boy waiting for her in his crib. He was such a dear child. She knew his blonde hair would darken as he grew older just as Frank's had as she was told. She didn't mind. He was such a wonderful baby and she knew he would be a wonderful boy. When she had reached his crib, he stood and held his arms out to be picked up.

"I see you've been doing magic again," she laughed as she picked the boy up. He never did magic outside of the house and she could not yet convince Augusta Longbottom that her Neville was very advanced for his age. But there in the crib was the evidence she had seen almost every day since he was six months old. When she put him down for the night, she always gave him his favorite toy, a stuffed dragon. Yet every morning, his crib was filled with his menagerie of stuffed animals.

The Neville Alice remembered might reach up to the knee of the tall sandy haired young man who had entered the parlor with two women, a red haired young woman and a dark haired older woman. She was certain the older woman was Amber, Neville's Nanny who was on holiday yesterday - to her. The young woman had to be the young man's girlfriend judging by the couple's arms around waist and other body language. This young man stood erect and confident. Alice knew it was her Neville - all grown up now. Tears began falling from her eyes as she stood up and walked slowly towards the young man.

"Neville?" she asked again.

The young man looked stunned as did the dark haired older woman. The younger red head was looking up at her boyfriend with concern on her face. Neville nodded.

"Mum?" he asked.



Alice nodded as she wrapped her arms around her son and cried into his chest. Frank had joined her.

“Don’t know whether they should call you Longbottom or Longshanks,” Frank quipped at his son who was at least three inches taller than he was.

“Dad?”

The man nodded.

“But how?”

Frank jerked his head towards Harry and Hermione.

“Thanks Harry,” Neville said. His parents were back! Harry had something to do with it and Neville was once again certain that there was nothing known to magic that Harry was not capable of doing.

“Don’t look at me, mate,” Harry said. “All I did was ask that they be brought here so you could be near them. You’re the reason they are back from wherever they had been.”

“M-me?”

“They were under a curse,” Hermione said. “A curse that could only be lifted when the caster died.”

“Bellatrix?”

Hermione nodded.

“You saved their lives, Neville,” Harry added as he and Hermione and the other two witches left the room. “Dinner’s in an hour,” Harry added as he departed leaving Neville surrounded in a great group hug with his real parents and his ladies.

Neville was a little conflicted. He was filled with joy that whatever had happened had brought him his parents. But, he was not sure how he would explain what had happened over the past couple of days. But that could wait. For the first time he could remember, his mother and father knew who he was and were hugging him. He did not know how long the hug lasted nor did he care.

When the hug finally broke, Neville looked at his father as he tried to remove the Longbottom ring from his finger. "I believe this is yours," Neville stared to say.

"Neville," Frank said, "the ring has passed on. Had I been Lord Longbottom, which I was not, it would still be yours now. Once the ring passes to the next generation, it cannot be passed back."

"But," Neville began to protest.

"You are Lord Longbottom now," Frank said. "From what Harry has told us, you will be a great one. When I get better I can assist and advise you, if you like."

"Thanks. Better?"

"The Healers say mentally we're fit. But physically, it will be a few months before we are where we should be."

"Oh."

"Magically as well. We've been told it'll be a couple of months before we can even begin to retrain with our wands."

Neville gulped. "Er..."

"What?" Alice and Frank asked.

"Um - I guess I have some explaining to do," Neville began.

"I guess so," Alice agreed thinking Neville was talking about the two women with him. Neville picked up on that and sighed.

"Looks like I have even more explaining to do," he chuckled. "Please have a seat?"

Once everyone was seated, Neville began: "Wands. I don't know where yours is, Mum. My guess is that it was at the Manor, but I don't know. And Dad? - it's so weird saying that - Gran gave me your wand before I started at Hogwarts. Did Harry tell you about the Department of Mysteries?"

The older couple nodded. "We're proud of you," Frank said.

"Gran said you would be. Well, your wand was broken so..."

"We can always buy new ones, Neville," Alice said. "Don't worry."

Neville nodded.

"Mum and Dad? I would like you to meet my wife and Consort Susan Marie Longbottom. She's the last of the Bones family."

Alice raised an eyebrow. She really was in no position to be critical. Neville was emancipated and Lord Longbottom. Still, she had always had a quick tongue. "Is it the custom now to marry so young?"

"Um - not that I know of. I mean, Harry and Hermione are, but we only found that out last night."

"Did Augusta know about this?" Frank asked.

"She knew we were going to," Neville said. "Kind of funny really."

"What do you mean?"

"I never thought Gran would actually encourage me to do that."

“She did?”

“Day after we got home from Hogwarts we had tea with her and Susan’s Aunt Amelia Bones and asked them for permission to get married. We were thinking a wedding after we finished Hogwarts. They both told us to get married this summer and specifically that she should become my Consort. If you ask me, I think they both hoped we’d do it that night but...”

Frank started laughing. “That old witch!”

“Frank!” Alice scolded.

“Come on Alice! We had just finished Fifth Year when we announced our intentions. And what did my Mum do?”

Alice blushed.

Frank looked at his son. “Your Gran - once her parents and Dad gave us their blessing - your Gran led us to the large Guest Room and locked us in telling us we could not come out until your Mum was my Consort. Fortunately, Dad rescued us, although he did say there was really no point in waiting. Your Mum became my Consort a couple of weeks later. I guess we needed a little time to get used to the idea.”

Neville chuckled. “We must have been channeling you. Gran told us to get busy last Sunday. Took us until yesterday before we felt we were ready.”

“Was that before or after,” Alice began.

“Before the attack. We were on our way back when it happened.”

“Good. I was concerned you might have done it because you felt you had to or because of the stress of that. If it was before, then it was because you wanted to which is as it should be.”

“On your way back?”

"I wanted someplace special and I thought my room at the Manor that's just..."

"Wrong," Susan and Alice said in unison.

"So where?" Alice asked.

"Under the big oak tree down by the lake," Neville replied innocently. "I always liked that spot."

"We always liked that spot," Susan added.

They heard a snort. Suddenly Frank was laughing and Alice giggling. After a moment Frank calmed down and looked at the confused people across from him. "Dad always said there was some kind of powerful magic about that tree. Told me that after your Mum became my Consort. Three guesses where that happened and the first two don't count."

"You're kidding!" Neville gasped.

"Not just your Mum and I," Frank said. "If what Dad told me was correct, you're the ninth generation of Longbottoms to bond under that tree."

"And you did not know this 'til after?"

"Part of the tradition. I was a little put off at the time thinking we had lost our virginity and bonded probably on the same patch of grass as my parents. But now? Now I think it proves two things: first that you're a true Longbottom and second that you and Susan are meant to be. Welcome to the family, Susan."

"Thanks," Susan replied. "And welcome back."

"Thanks."

"We're sorry we weren't there for you Sweetie," Alice said.

“Don’t be. Not your fault,” Neville replied. “I - well - I’m still wondering whether or not all of this is just a dream. OUCH!”

Neville jumped a little. “AMBER! She pinched me!”

“Still think you’re dreaming, Nev?”

“Did you have to pinch me?”

“Less embarrassing than what I had in mind,” Susan said.

“And what was your idea?”

“Amber and me snogging you senseless!”

“In front of my parents?”

“Amber’s way was less embarrassing.”

“But Susan’s would have been more fun,” Amber chuckled.

Frank and Alice both raised eyebrows at this repartee. “I take it Amber’s yours now as well?”

Neville nodded. He saw an accusing look on his Mum’s face. “What was I supposed to do, sell her? She practically raised me. She taught me to read and write and magic during the summer hols. She’s my friend! She deserves to be treated like the wonderful person that she is and...”

“Thanks Nev,” Amber said softly with a tear in her eye.

“But why would you need a ...” Alice began.

“I don’t! No one does! I learned what Amber was when I was nine or ten. It made me sick! Not sick of her, but sick that I live in a society that could do that to people like her! No woman deserves that! And

yet, we condone as a society a system where women - all women - are little more than property and baby factories. The only women who are not are the ones who either become consorts or are too ugly to attract any wizard! We sell our daughters off as wives or we sell them off as concubines. And for a Muggle Born like Hermione? What are her options? If she had not become Harry's Consort, she would be some Pureblood's whore by the end of this month! That's sick and anyone who thinks it's right is sick.

"Amber is a smart, kind, caring, patient woman, not a whore! I am going to let her be the woman she was meant to be and whatever she wants to be. She's part of my family now and in my family women are not second class property! She's a Longbottom and we take care of our friends and family! And you should know this now! She and Susan will both bear MY children! And I expect Amber to be treated the same way as my wife - as a Lady!"

During Neville's outburst of righteous indignation, he never raised his voice, but the conviction behind the words was unmistakable. Alice's eyes were downcast. She was a little surprised to be scolded and chastised by her own son, but the thing was he was right. She felt guilty and disappointed in herself. She had accepted things the way they were and that included certain of the prejudices. While she did not look down on Muggle Borns, she did look down on Concubines. Was there really any difference?

"I'm sorry Neville," she said, "I didn't mean..."

"And just so there's no misunderstanding, in addition to us there are seven women living in this Manor. One is Harry's Consort Lady Hermione Potter. Five are his Concubines and he expects them to be treated the same as his wife. The sixth is probably going to become his Consort."

"How can he have two Consorts?" Alice asked.

"He's the Head of two Ancient and Noble Houses."

"Black?" Frank asked.

Neville nodded.

“How?”

“His godfather Sirius was the last Lord Black being that he was never convicted of a major crime. Sirius had no children and named his second cousin and godson as his successor.”

Frank laughed. “Guess the Black Patriarchs are spinning in their graves!”

“Why’s that, Dear?” Alice asked.

“Tojours Pur! Black family motto. ‘Always Pure.’ Marry a Muggle or Muggle Born and you were disowned. Now the Potters almost always marry Muggle Borns.”

“Including Hermione,” Susan added.

“The Blacks meant ‘Pure of Blood.’ The family was practically inbred. Guess that motto needs to be changed.”

“Funny,” Susan said. “That was discussed at breakfast. It was agreed by both Houses that the motto remain unchanged. The meaning however...”

“What do you mean?”

“The old meaning meant blood and bloodlines. But, can anyone say Harry is not pure of heart? Or that the Black Concubines are not? Or that the possible Black Consort is not? Harry is the heir of Sir Galahad who was pure of heart and he is as well. It is the perfect motto for his new Black family.”

There a long pause during which Alice reminded herself that she should not be hard on Neville. She had not raised him after all and from what she had seen, he was turning into a wonderful young man. Alice decided to change the subject.



“So you and Susan?” she asked.

“Erm- what do you mean?” Neville asked.

“When did you meet? Start dating? That sort of thing.”

“It was the first day of classes First Year,” Susan said. “I’m in Hufflepuff and Neville’s in Gryffindor and the first class of the afternoon was Transfiguration. We were to sit in pairs and it just happened that we kind of sat together. As it turned out, we would also have had History of Magic and Herbology with Gryffindor that year and Neville and I just sat with each other. After a couple of weeks, we started studying together in the Library and became best of friends. On weekends during first year, we would take long walks together along the lake and talk.

“We wrote to each other all through the summer and even met at Diagon Alley a couple of times for ice cream. I don’t think either of us considered ourselves boyfriend girlfriend yet, but looking back, I count those as our first dates.”

“Me too,” Neville added.

“Second year was much like first although we were a lot closer,” Susan said. “Spring time walking along the lake was the first time he held my hand.”

“I knew then I liked her a lot,” Neville said. “Wasn’t able to say that to her yet.”

“Boys and girls were forbidden topics,” Susan said. “We never said that they were, but we’ve talked since and realized we both had similar questions and the same problem. How to I ask my best friend about how to get a boy to notice me when the boy I wanted to notice me is that best friend?”

“Second summer, we were apart again aside from a few more ‘dates’ in Diagon Alley,” Neville picked up the story. “I still had not asked her to be my girlfriend although we now both privately thought of ourselves that way. Third Year and we sat together in class, studied together and spent our weekends together as well. During the Christmas Hols, she invited me over and I invited her over. Her Aunt really seemed to like me and Gran was thrilled that I seemed to have a girlfriend from a decent family and all. Not that it mattered to me. Susan could have been a Muggle Born and I’d still be her friend.”

“Thanks Nev,” Susan said.

“Amber seemed to have seen something,” Neville continued. “From the Christmas Hols on through the rest of the year she was talking to me or writing to me about Susan. She said Susan should be my girlfriend and I should not wait and such. I was concerned that Susan did not see me that way, but Amber kept saying she did.”

“Because she knew,” Susan said. “She knew because I told her what I thought of you and told her you didn’t see me that way and she kept telling me I was wrong about that and I kept wanting to believe her but was terrified to.”

“Amber wore us down,” Neville said. “We were officially if not publicly boyfriend and girlfriend our first week back that summer. No, we were not shagging. Just a lot of kissing and cuddling under the oak tree at the Manor and the one we found along the lake at Hogwarts.”

“Not the one by the three standing stones?” Alice asked.

Neville nodded. “It’s our favorite place.”

Alice smacked Frank’s shoulder. “What is it about you Longbottom men and oak trees?”

“Erm,” Frank began.

“I proposed to Susan under that oak tree at Hogwarts,” Neville admitted.

“Frank! Is this some sort of conspiracy?” Alice said, but there was mirth in her voice.

“Erm...”

“You proposed to me beneath that very tree your son did. You bonded with me beneath the same tree he did. Sounds like a conspiracy!”

“Lest we not forget that Neville bonded with me beneath an oak tree by a lake,” Amber offered.

“When?”

“This morning,” Susan said. “It was so like our special places at Hogwarts and the Manor.”

“And you let her,” Alice said.

“I did,” Susan said. “Bonding should be special. It should be something that unites a family. Hermione told me that. She and Harry bonded in their special place and Harry has bonded with all of his Concubines there as well. Hermione said it connects people when they share a special place and memory and I think she’s right. With Neville, we have our oak trees.”

“And Harry and Hermione and his women?”

“A comfortable couch in the largest magical library in the British Isles.”

“Hogwarts?”

“No. Here.”

“Really?” Frank asked.

“So we’ve been told. Haven’t seen it yet.”

“You haven’t?”

“No,” Neville said. “Haven’t seen much of this place yet. We only got in last night following the fight. Today, I took Susan and Amber out to that tree I found for a picnic and a chance to relax and comfort each other following that fight. We only just got back.”

“And just where are we?” Frank asked.

“Erm - Harry’s place?” Neville said.

Amber then handed the Longbottom’s a paper.

## THE POTTERSPORT JOURNAL

Monday, July 1st, 1996

### SPECIAL INVESTITURE EDITION!

(A Keeper for all you scrap book folks)

### NEW DUKE OF CHARENWELL HARRY THE FIRST!

Duke and Duchess Knighted By Order of Her Majesty!

All About The Duke’s Wonderful And Beautiful Ladies!

New Duke Announces Bold Plans For The Future!

The Duke’s Lost Sister Is One of Our Own!

OUR NEW DUKE: LORD SIR HARRY JAMES POTTER! TWENTY - SEVENTH DUKE OF CHARENWELL, FIFTY-FIRST HEAD OF THE ANCIENT AND NOBLE HOUSE OF POTTER, FORTY-SEVENTH HEAD OF THE ANCIENT AND NOBLE HOUSE OF BLACK, ORDER OF HER MAJESTY’S KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE!

He insists we address him as just “Harry,” just as his grandfather our last Duke and Lord insisted. Odd when you consider his story. He knew nothing of magic until he turned eleven and nothing of his heritage until just a week ago. Yet like his beloved Grandfather, he’s

just a normal bloke born to exceptional circumstances who does not wish to put on airs or lord over us lesser mortals as some might so endeavor. His first day out he spent at Martha's, our unofficial National Restaurant and hanging out with the crew of the Maggie Marie at the Sail Loft Pub in Pottersport. It is also said he may have done a spot of shopping, but that cannot be confirmed.

"He's a right regular lad," says Dickie Banks from the Maggie Marie. "A regular bloke. Mick invites him out for a spot of fishing - entry level mind you, kid's gotta earn his keep - an' our new Duke says he'll do it! Man's as rich as a King an' yet willing to pull his weight with the rest of us! We got us a real Duke again!"

"Flew up to me shop yesterday," John Richards of Potter's Vineyard said, "Very polite and humble lad. Had no idea he was the Duke apparent. His father was a right menace, but this lad was so humble and ... well it was an honor to cut his hair. Didn't know he was the Duke 'til he drove up to my place this morning in one of Lord Charles' flash cars. I says to him he's so like his Granddad. No airs aside from flash cars. He says he really isn't into cars, just likes flash women. Met his Consort and his lovely concubines. The lad does have taste in that regard. Right proper ladies the lot of them." ...

## KNIGHTHOODS BRING HONOR TO THE DUTCHY

Before an estimated crowd of 10,000 packed into the courtyard of Pottersport Castle, the Investiture proceeded according to the time honored customs set forth in the Charter of 1217. The Pottersport Guards and Lancers escorted the carriages carrying our Lord Mayor, Lord and Lady Potter and Lord Potter's lovely ladies to the steps of Government House whereupon Lord Mayor Lupin, Second Steward of the Realm following the tragic death of Lord Charles in 1988, relinquished his status as Steward and invested Lord Harry as the Twenty-Seventh Duke of Charenwell. The necklaces were draped over the shoulders of the new Duke and Dutchess and we have our Sovereign again.

What was not expected was the participation of Sir Stephen Blaire, Ambassador from the Court of Her Majesty Elizabeth II, Queen of

Great Britain. Once Lord Harry and Lady Hermione had been invested, Sir Stephen was brought forward and then asked that Lord Mayor Lupin and Dora Tonks Black, one of the Dukes Ladies and Wife in all but Law, join the Duke and Duchess. Thereafter, Sir Stephen stepped forward on behalf of Her Majesty, the Prime Minister, Parliament and people of Great Britain. He read a citation honoring our four countrymen for services to the Realm, in particular for their heroism in combat fighting against the Death Eaters of Wizarding Britain in pitched combat June 14th last. The Late Lord Sirius Black, who named Lord Harry as his heir was also honored and pardoned by Her Majesty's Government, an act that by law must be recognized by the government of Wizarding Britain. Each received the Order of the British Empire and were inducted into the Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, the Order reserved for Magicals who defend Queen and Country...

"Something tells me this place is not in Britain," Frank observed.

Harry, Hermione, Minerva and Mallory had just left the Longbottoms. Hermione and Minerva were headed to the Library for some reading while Harry was heading towards his Study. Mallory and gone to check on Luna who was having a hard time. Harry and the others had all spent a little time with the distraught young witch during the day. She had spent the day in bed, crying for what she had lost and saying very little to anyone. When she was not crying, she seemed lost in thought.

Harry had sat down to write yet another letter to Gringotts. For the past week, his owl Hedwig had been a busy bird bringing letters to and from Gringotts has Harry learned both of his inheritance and of ways he would fight this war from afar. The Goblins seemed keenly interested in some of his plans as they were directed against Wizards and in particular Wizards whom the Goblin Nation despised. His most recent letter was from Ragnok, Chief of the British Goblins and Director of the London Branch of Gringotts suggesting an alliance both between the Charenwell Goblin Clan and the Duke of Charenwell and against Wizarding Britain and the Purebloods. Harry's reply was designed to be encouraging, stating the profits were such that he was going to discuss the proposal with an eye

towards accepting with his advisors and the Chief of the Charenwell Clan.

He had just sent Hedwig off with his reply when there was a knock on the door to his study. Harry hoped it was Hermione. Her “icky time” had ended, but they had only managed to be intimate twice this day as both were very busy. He was thus a little disappointed to see it was Mallory.

“Can I come in?” she asked.

Harry waived her in. “How’s Luna?” he asked.

“Still depressed. No surprises there. But she’s beginning to cope with her loss and should be mostly right as rain soon.”

“That’s good.”

“That’s not why I’m here.”

“Oh?”

“Do you know what this is?” she asked handing Harry a plastic stick of some kind.

“It’s Muggle made,” Harry said. Wizards did not use plastics. “Aside from that, not a clue.”

“It’s a home pregnancy test.”

Harry stared at the stick in his hand. “Aren’t there spells that do that?”

“There are. Most witches are taught them at some point. Problem is, most witches lack the finesse with the spell. Done properly, it can detect pregnancy after two weeks. Otherwise, four to six. I believe that the sooner a woman and her Healer knows she’s pregnant the better. A pregnant witch needs to avoid certain kinds of magic. Being hit with certain spells, certain potions, handling certain potions

ingredients can all harm her and her baby. Likewise, she needs to avoid consuming alcohol or caffeine, which means no tea or coffee..."

"Hermione's going to love you." Harry laughed. Hermione was a huge fan of coffee.

"There are other things as well," Mallory chuckled. "She should eat right, avoid too many sweets, and remain physically active unless it is contraindicated due to complications. Basically, she should really begin taking care of herself as soon as possible."

"So what's with this?"

"Our spell can tell you that a witch is pregnant and with what: boy, girl, twins, magical or non-magical. But only a skilled Healer can truly detect it early and the spell can be draining. This test can detect pregnancy within a couple of days and is rarely wrong."

"How?"

"A woman becomes pregnant the moment her fertilized egg imbeds itself in the lining of her womb and the lining accepts it. At that moment, changes begin and these include changes in her hormones that help her and her baby adjust to being pregnant. These hormonal changes manifest themselves in many ways, but they can be detected in her urine very early on. This stick detects those pregnancy hormones. The woman pees on it and if nothing happens she's not pregnant. If, however, a blue line appears then she is."

"This one has a blue line," Harry gasped. "A-anyone ... anyone we know?"

Mallory nodded and blushed. She was worried how Harry would react. "Me."

"Y-y-you're p-pregnant?" Harry asked. He had known this was coming. As his Consort, Hermione could not use magical means to prevent pregnancy and clearly was not interested in trying and he had,



after all, given Mallory and Minerva permission. As of the night before last, he could add Daphne and Dora to that list. He wondered how he would react to the first news. He had seen a few of the older students at school deal with this situation and most of the blokes did not handle it well at all if they thought their girlfriend was knocked up. Then again, they were not trying to get pregnant, were they?

What surprised Harry was his reaction. He actually felt joy! True, he would have liked it if Hermione was the first, but she would be here telling him the news soon. Harry stood up and walked over to Mallory, pulling her into a tight hug as he kissed her cheek. She was not expecting this reaction and she could not help but relax in his arms. She soon became the victim of the most tender kiss she could remember.

“I’m gonna be a Dad,” Harry said with passion in his eyes when their kiss broke. Then, his face fell a little. “Guess this means no more Mallory Time for a while, huh?”

“Don’t be silly, Harry,” Mallory giggled. “I’m pregnant, not broken! As long as the pregnancy is normal, you can have me whenever you want practically until the final few weeks. Of course, at some point I’ll be big as a house so you might not want...”

“Fear not fair maiden,” Harry whispered. “You’ll be big as a house with our child. Somehow that seems very sexy to me.”

“You’re incorrigible,” Mallory laughed.

“Nope, just a randy teenager.”

“Thank you, Harry. This is what I always wanted. You kept your promise and that means a lot to me.”

“You’re a wonderful woman, Mallory. You deserve to be happy.”

Dora arrived back home shortly before dinner. She had spent the day arranging the transfer of goods from Longbottom Manor and the Bones’ House to the Estate and reported that everything would be in

a storage building nearby by the morning. Neville and Susan could then decide what to use in their temporary lodgings. The third floor of the Manor was being renovated for the use of House Longbottom for the foreseeable future, those renovations being under the supervision of Dobby who had returned to service.

Dora had also checked on Privet Drive. She or Remus stopped by each day to see if any mail had been delivered and to keep the Dursleys in the dark that their Nephew had gone missing. There had been a very rude letter from Ron earlier, a letter rude enough that Harry decided it was not worth a reply. Aside from that, there had been no letters whatsoever. Dora had actually been a little amused as she had, after all, used magic when she rescued Harry from that pit. Oddly, the Ministry took no action or never noticed. Today was different. There was a package and a letter waiting in Harry's room from Ginny. The letter was short and seemed innocent enough. The package, however, was another thing entirely. It contained cookies and other sweets for Harry, all laced with an overdose of Amorentia.

"How much?" Harry asked.

"Let's put it this way, Harry," Dora chuckled, "but for your bond with Hermione and to a lesser extent with us, if you had eaten her presents, the first moment you saw her afterwards you would have taken her right then and there regardless of where you were or who else was around. You would not be able to stop yourself."

"And if she wanted a little romance first?"

"You would be unable to control yourself."

"Basically, whether she wanted me or not, I would practically rape her?"

"Right then and there, yes. And over and over again, given your recovery time."

"Interesting."

Remus, Bill and Fleur had been invited to dinner at the Manor that night. Their invitation was not as a result of the package from Ginny. Remus was invited when Harry learned that Neville's parents had miraculously recovered and Harry knew they had been friends once. Bill and Fleur were invited because Harry and Hermione felt they needed support due to the falling out they had had with Bill's family. Luna, still very quiet, completed the guest list at the dinner table in the Private Apartments.

Remus was stunned to see his old friends. They still looked terrible, but they were in their right minds and their prognosis for a full recovery was excellent if not absolutely certain. Harry explained about the curse that had left them without their minds for over fourteen years and how the death of Bellatrix lifted the curse. He then introduced Alice and Frank to Bill and Fleur Weasley and explained their situation as well as Luna's. He then got to his own family and had to suppress a laugh as he watched the Longbottoms reaction to hearing about how it was he had gained six "wives" in about as many days.

"You were a Concubine?" Alice asked her favorite Professor in shock.

"I am a Concubine," Minerva replied with more than a hint of pride in her voice. "I have served my Lords Potter since 1943."

"It does not bother you that you're a ..." Alice began.

"Not here. There is no stigma attached with being a Concubine here."

"Why not?"

"Because," Harry said, "every witch or wizard born here is descended from a Potter Concubine. My own Great-great grandmother was one. Prior to my Great-grandfather, the Lords Potter typically had more than one Concubine and all of them were allowed children. My Great-grandmother - a Black - did not allow this tradition to continue. I, however, will and already have. Four of my

ladies have permission. The fifth, the youngest will receive permission if she wants it once she has taken her O.W.L.s in a year or so." Harry then introduced Daphne and Astoria and explained how that came to be his.

"I'm still having problems with how open you are about this," Alice said. "Aren't you ashamed?"

"At what?" Harry demanded. "At them? Absolutely not! I am ashamed that I am a wizard if this is how witches are treated by society! They are people, not property! Do you think any of them wanted to be a Concubine? Do you think that was their dream as a young girl? Do you think it's their fault they became Concubines? It's not. It's the fault of a society that devalues human life in general and women in particular. I'm playing the hand I was dealt. If I can make their lives better then that is what I am going to do! It is the attitudes that allow such a condition to exist that give rise to the Voldemorts of our world. I am going to defeat that bastard! That much is certain! But, lest you think otherwise, I will bring down this vile society and see to it that it can never exist again! Wizards will learn their place and that place is one where no sane wizard will ever again believe he is better than anyone solely because he's a wizard."

"You're talking treason," Frank started.

"No, not at all. As I am the sovereign head of an independent magical country, I cannot be accused of betraying a foreign government. I am talking about war! Voldemort is not just a threat to magical Britain, he is a threat to the entire human race! He and any who follow him must be destroyed. No more will those who stand against the light face only a lengthy prison sentence! The Death Eaters will one day learn what it means to Eat Death! The Pureblood Supremacists of all colors will learn that they are, by their own actions and beliefs, legitimate targets in this war. Those who support openly or covertly the Pureblood belief of Supremacy will be destroyed regardless of whether they are Death Eater or claimed champions of the Light. The Light, the true Greater Good, is to build a society where a person is what they make of themselves and not about who their parents were. If a few thousand must die for the vile society to

cease and a new egalitarian society to arise from the ashes, their deaths are acceptable losses upon the altar of freedom, equality and respect!"

There was a long, stunned silence before Hermione spoke.

"You're getting better at giving speeches, Love," she said.

"Speeches," Harry huffed. "Until I can turn words into action, that's all they are."

"In time, Love, in time."

"I'm sorry Harry," Frank said. "My wife and I have missed fourteen years and it's still hard to realize this isn't 1981 anymore. I guess we have a lot of catching up to do."

Harry nodded. "It's okay. You'll have plenty of time here to do that."

"Why do we have plenty of time and where is here?" Frank asked.

"The Death Eaters attacked your Manor," Harry replied. "Got through your wards. Do you honestly think you would be safe there? Neville? Are you willing to take your wife and Amber back home?"

Neville shook his head.

"Neville," Alice began. "It's our home! It's your legacy as Lord Longbottom!"

"My legacy?" Neville said. "My legacy is not bricks and mortar. My legacy is HERE! My wife! My friends! Our future! That is my legacy and I'll be damned if I am going back to bait Death Eaters! One day it may be safe for House Longbottom to return to its lands. That day is not today nor anytime soon. I stand with House Potter. House Longbottom remains here where it is safe until we can reclaim what is rightfully ours, but not before. When the Death Eaters and those who support them are gone for good, then we shall return. Until then, Britain can ROT!"

“And where are we?” Frank asked?

“The Duchy of Charenwell,” Harry replied. “It is the Island of Shen, located approximately a hundred and fifty miles southwest of Lands End. My family owns the whole bloody island. A hundred and seventy miles east to west, eighty miles north to south at the extremes. Thirty-five hundred square miles all told.”

“But Harry,” Hermione complained, “you said it’s only about a tenth of that!”

“My main Estate, where we are now, which is known as the ‘West Farm’ is 387 square miles. Since my investiture, I’ve looked it all up. West Farm is where this Manor is and where the towns of Charlestown, Potter’s Vineyard and Pottersport are located. It has close to 13,000 human inhabitants of which over 11,000 are witches and wizards.

“Sixty miles to the east on the north coast is a broad peninsula called ‘North Farm.’ It is about four hundred and fifty square miles all told, but with only about 5,000 inhabitants, over 4,000 or so being magicals. There are two smaller towns there: St. George and Norseton Moor. The land is mostly farms where they grow grains, mainly wheat and barley.

“ ‘East Farm’ is located on the east coast closet to England. It is a little over a hundred miles from the east boundary of West Farm to the west boundary of East Farm. East Farm is the smallest in area with only about 325 square miles, but the largest in population. The Port of Darby alone has over 14,000 inhabitants, of which well over 12,000 are magical. It’s our shipping port for import and export to England and beyond and the home of our merchant fleet. An additional 9,000 live in the Farm and its smaller towns and work the fields and such. It’s pastures and fields not unlike here.

“Then there’s the ‘South Farm’ located on the southern coast. It’s only about twenty square miles or so. The Queen has a Manor there which is pretty much the only reason it exists. It has a population of

about 1,500. The remaining two thirds of the Island are undeveloped, uncultivated and uninhabited. Half of that is a dedicated nature preserve for magical creatures, most noted among them being the only breeding colony of Charenwell Reds known.”

Harry noted Luna perk up at that.

“Charenwell Reds?” Neville asked.

“Daddy wrote about those once,” Luna said, already saying more and with more life than she had since she arrived. “They are a rare breed of dragon. They are the only ones that feed exclusively on sea food - fish, seals, sea birds and the like. Something to do with the salt, some have supposed. So long as you stay clear of their eggs, they are quite docile for wyrms. Oh Harry? Could it be there may be Snorkacks here?”

“I’ve read there may be,” Harry replied. “They live in the reserve the sources say.”

“Can we go see?”

“Sure. Sometime soon, Luna, we can go look for your Snorkacks.”

“Thank you Harry. Daddy always thought they were in mythical Charenwell, but of course he never could come here.”

“I am sorry ‘bout that, Luna.”

“Don’t be. It’s safe here. If any tourist could come it wouldn’t be. Still...”

“Remember to bring your camera when we go. You can take pictures and publish them in the Quibbler,” assuming they are real, Harry’s thoughts added.

“Oh goodie! But...”

“But what, Luna?”

“With Daddy gone...”

“Tell you what. I’ll buy his paper and you can see to it that it still publishes.”

“You - you’d do that for me?”

“I’m your friend, right?”

“Thanks, Harry.”

“And the rest of the land?” Frank Longbottom asked after a long pause.

“The rest can only be developed if the Duke - in other words I - authorize it,” Harry said.

“So why is this place safer than our Manor?” Frank asked.

“ And why haven’t I seen anything about this island before?” Hermione added.

“The Island was ceded to an ancestor of mine in 713. He and his descendants began warding the hell out of it. The entire island is now under some of the most powerful wards in the known world. It is totally unplotable. It is protected by anti-portkey, apparition, animagus and elf wards. While I can authorize a portkey, no foreigner can do likewise. Those who were born here or are authorized by our law or my leave can travel here by magic. Even then, only the most powerful could apparate here as apparition over water is difficult at best. We are near the outside range of that for even Dumbledore, although as he has not been authorized, he’d bounce off and find himself far from land.

“There are also disillusionment, Muggle Repelling, and Notice-Me-Not wards over the whole island. Basically, this place does not exist



outside of here itself. Then again, it most certainly does as we supply sixty to seventy percent of all food stuffs and ninety percent of most common - and several uncommon - potions supplies to Britain. Half of the dragon stuff or more comes from here as East Farm actually has Dragons in captivity for that purpose. They are bred in captivity so the wild ones are left alone. Even if a bad guy could get passed those wards, there are also Death Wards and Anti-Dark Wards as well. If you're a threat to anyone who lives here, you'd die trying to attack."

"Those wards are illegal!" Frank protested.

"In Britain, yes," Harry agreed. "And inside the Farms they are as well. But we are not under the Ministry for Magic. We are an independent magical realm and can decide our own means of defending ourselves and protecting the secrets of magic from the outside world. Over ten percent of our population is non-magical. They all know about magic and we all keep it secret from the rest of the world, except the Queen and her government - or at least those within her House or Parliament who are already in the know."

"And how do you know all this, Harry?" Hermione asked in an accusing tone.

"Erm..."

"Harry?" she growled.

"Yesterday," Harry began, "erm - yesterday I went into Granddad's special pensieve. I mean with that Investiture and such! A bloody Duke? A bloody Sovereign and all that? Why didn't I know? So I went in and had a long, long chat with granddad. Yesterday morning I was in there for forty minutes. For my mind it was forty days. I learned so much, Hermione! I learned about my family and who my ancestors were and about magical heirs and such. Remember Second Year when everyone thought I was the Heir of Slytherin because I speak to snakes and when I was able to draw the Sword of Gryffindor to save me from the basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets?"

"I wasn't there for the sword," Hermione protested.

“But did you believe me when I told you?”

Hermione nodded.

“You ever wonder how that happened? I certainly did and Dumbledore either did not know or did and refused to tell me.”

“How?” Hermione asked.

“Those two events meant - as I learned - that I am a magical heir of Gryffindor and Slytherin.”

There were several gasps at that.

“Salazar’s house motto was not Pure of Blood as the current Snakes have been told, it was Pure of Heart. That’s what he wanted,” Harry said.

“So we were right?” Daphne asked. “We suggested - my sister and I - that the Black Family Motto should not change because ‘Always Pure’ can now mean Always Pure of Heart?”

“It was, apparently, the original,” Harry said. “Sal wanted those pure of heart. He liked the ambitious as well. Bravery, studiousness, loyalty to others were not his type. He wanted people who were true to themselves and to others. All the rest would come from that, he felt. Over the centuries, that became perverted and convoluted into our current problems by those whose ambitions overwhelmed their hearts and we now stand where we are today. Sal was my ancestor through my great-great grandfather. My Godfather was his true magical heir and with his death, as second in line and having the heart he deemed necessary, I became the second even though Malfoy is closer in descent. His heart is neither true nor pure.”

“And Voldemort?” Hermione asked.

“Legal, not magical heir,” Harry said. “A magical heir descends from oldest child to oldest child without regard to gender. Should an heir

not have a child, but be named as a father or mother to a child by designation in the event of the death of the real parent, that child becomes the magical heir upon their guardian's death. Legal heir is oldest son to oldest son, period! One reason Concubines came into existence was to ensure males in the order of succession. Under some family traditions - such as Slytherin's, the last name died if the son's mother was not the wife or Consort of the father. The son, while heir, took the name of the mother and not the father. Hence, the demise of the founders' names."

"So Sirius, by becoming your godfather, became your magical ancestor?" Hermione asked.

Harry nodded. "And as he was at the time the magical heir of Slytherin and, apparently, was already unable to have a child of his own, upon becoming his godson, I became his magical heir. Apparently, his inability with Mallory predated his time in the Azkaban Resort."

"You're saying that he could never have children?"

"So it seems. Consider his close relatives. His first cousins are or were all married and only two of them had a child. One child. Dora's Mum married a Muggle Born as did my Dad, but she was a Pureblood. One child. My dad was not, two and goodness knows there may have been more. Fair few true Purebloods are one and out. Not a smart way to preserve the lines really. The Greengrasses and Weasleys are the exception it seems, not the rule."

"Hold it," Daphne said, "while our parent's do love us, they kept trying for a son. Gave up, it seems, after five daughters."

"So then look at your Slytherin housemates," Harry said. "How many reproduced after a son was born?"

"Point taken," Daphne replied. "Most generally did not."

"Unlike me," Harry said glancing at Mallory. "Your mother time is yours. If your first born is a son, it's up to you and not me as to

whether there are others. You want only one or many, not my call. I think each of you could be wonderful Mums so who am I to deny you that?"

"Thank you," several voices answered.

"Besides," Harry smirked, "it's a bit late for me to whine about babies."

"What are you saying, Harry?" Dora asked.

"Mallory is expecting!"

The rest of the dinner conversation focused on her confirming this and her getting heartfelt congratulations from the others. What warmed Harry's heart was how Hermione did not seem put out at all and genuinely pleased that one of Harry's Girls was expecting, stating she had no intention of having an "Icky Time" any time soon as in she expected to be expecting before the summer was out. This may have come as a shock to some, namely those who were not Potters or Black or Neville and his two ladies, but they accepted it.

"What's life without a family?" Harry mused at one point during the dinner.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).

2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16(Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33(SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE:

### WHAT TO DO ABOUT ...

WEDNESDAY, JULY 3, 1996 - Potter Manor.

The previous evening's conversations had been about the Weasley plot against Harry. The Longbottoms, of course, did not know about it but everyone else there did. The arrival of the special package from Ginny prompted the need to begin to think about options. The one option that everyone agreed would not be considered was doing nothing. Neville and Susan were stunned that anyone from the family that everyone knew were the closest friends Harry had would even consider such a vile and illegal act.

Everyone was in agreement that Molly Weasley had to pay. Using an illegal love potion on an Heir to a Noble and Ancient House was both a crime and a sure fire way to launch a feud. Bill, Remus and Minerva were adamant that of the adults for now only Molly should pay. House Weasley had been allied with the Potters for centuries and were almost as close to the Potter line as House Longbottom. The Weasley line was also almost as ancient, but had lost its status and a true Ancient and Noble House centuries ago.

Molly, however, was a Prewett. The Prewetts were a much newer Pureblood line and while not openly supporting the likes of Voldemort, were staunch believers in Pureblood Supremacy. It was Daphne who pointed out the irony. Most all Death Eater families were actually relatively new to the Pureblood lines, at least those who could honestly claim that title. The Blacks were one of the few Ancient and Noble Houses that had Death Eaters amongst its members. The Greengrass family, while able to trace their magic back to the founding of Hogwarts, were Purebloods only by the strictest interpretation of the Laws of Heritage as they had a Muggle or Muggle Born as ancestors as recently as five generations ago.

The Prewetts had been political and financial rivals of the Potters for generations. They had a seat on the Wizengamot by virtue of some underhanded dealings that allowed them to buy the seat from a House that had held it for six hundred years and had opposed any

laws that might return them to their former status outside of the political aristocracy, as in any laws that promoted any rights that made Muggle Borns and Half Bloods equal to them. The Potters, Half Bloods by tradition as most wives and consorts were Muggle Borns, were the champions of those the Pureblood bigots despised and had been for centuries. What was more annoying to the Prewetts was that the Potters whether by accident or genetic quirk were charismatic and gifted politicians while the Prewetts and their supporters were not. It was as Remus reasoned a large reason why Dumbledore wanted the Potter line to end and probably why Molly was her chief co-conspirator. Eliminating Harry and raising his heir as a proper Pureblood (technically still half-blood) bigot would end the strongest opposition in the government to the Pureblood agenda.

Bill Weasley had begun his falling out with Dumbledore as Head Boy. He was convinced he had been picked because his mother was a reliable Pureblood unlike his father. He was expected to look the other way as Dumbledore discriminated against Muggle Borns in every way imaginable short of deny them admission altogether. He discovered early in his final year that not only was Dumbledore the Magical Guardian of all Muggle Borns at Hogwarts and many others as well, Dumbledore also sold his female wards off as Concubines regularly. The only Muggle Born witches who avoided such a fate were those who, like Hermione and Harry's mother, became Consorts before they could be sold. Bill's own brother Percy had purchased one of Dumbledore's charges Fifth Year - probably not long after a lucky night playing cards which was the prat's main vice - a girl named Penelope Clearwater. She was one of the few Muggle Borns who ever made Head Girl under Dumbledore's tenure as Headmaster and the only reason why she did was that she was then the bound Concubine of the Head Boy Percy Weasley, who Bill classified as more Prewett than Weasley.

Bill divided his family into two camps. The Weasley Camp were those who viewed and judged people by their deeds and character rather than their bloodlines. Firmly in this camp were his father and younger twin brothers Fred and George. The Prewett Camp were either open or closeted Pureblood bigots. In Bill's estimation this included his mother, Percy and Ron. Suddenly Ron's treatment of Hermione made sense. While arguably he didn't hate her as much as he hated

Slytherins - a Weasley trait - Ron was only slightly less hostile and his association with Harry and Harry's friendship with Hermione were the only reasons he was civil with her at all, and even that was not often.

Charlie Weasley was the only one Bill could not place. Charlie had learned to appear to sit on the fence and Bill was convinced that his younger brother had taken his job with dragons in Romania to stay out of the political nonsense. Bill had always thought Ginny was a Weasley at heart, but now he was not sure. Then again, he was not sure just how much she knew about the plot against Harry.

In Bill's opinion, his mother's actions made the reputation of his family forfeit. Moreover, after years with the goblins, he knew that sometimes taking out those loyal underlings was often the best way to weaken and destroy an enemy. Bill and Fleur were safe from any immediate repercussions of any action. They were favored employees of Gringotts and thus Goblin Friends, meaning if things ever got too hairy in their wizarding world, the Goblin Nation would welcome them. They were also now living in Charenwell, which meant that Magical Britain could rot. Bill's only real concerns right now were for his father and twin brothers and mainly the twins. The twins, however, fell into the category of Harry Friends, as in those who unlike Ron had never betrayed him. Charenwell offered both a new market for their joke shop and far less restrictive trade laws that would allow them to sell abroad without enriching the pockets of scores of Ministry bureaucrats, hence if things got dicey for them in Britain, they could relocate.

Bill really did not have an idea of how to deal with his Mum. He was convinced they had to be quick about it and it had to be public. The plot against House Potter had to be revealed in all of its gory details. Harry felt that there was too little to go on insofar as the murder plot was concerned, but also felt the potion alone would be more than enough if they could exploit it somehow. Leave it to the Slytherins to figure out and tell the others both how it could be done, when it should be done and just what kind of public scandal it would create for Molly Weasley and Dumbledore. The more Harry thought about the Greengrass sisters' plan, the more he liked it. The Old Man would have used guile, deception and stealth. Voldemort would simply have killed. There was a middle ground far worse than the extremes. It's



effects would be known by all, permanent and the victims would live long lives in ruin, but would live none the less.

When Harry awoke the next morning, the thought of the Weasley problem was still on his mind. A part of him, the part that stayed Ron's friend all these years for no other reason than that Ron was his first friend, hated what had happened in recent weeks. The part of him that had been abused, tormented and manipulated by those he was supposed to trust all his life, on the other hand, wanted some payback. Dumbledore was all about second chances, at least for those who made him look like the White Knight he was not. Dumbledore always preached to Harry about forgiveness, yet never really meant it unless it served his aims. Dumbledore's deceit and the Prewett-Weasley greed were about to come back to haunt them. The obvious victim would be Ginny. The real victims would be Molly, Dumbledore and his side of this civil war. It would not take them out, but it would get them out of Harry's way and life.

Harry woke up this morning with Hermione snuggled in his arms for the first time in almost a week. She had announced just after lunch the day before that her "icky time" was over and made it clear she had expected Harry to join her in celebrating as often as they could given their schedules, guests had Harry's responsibilities to the other women in his family. He certainly had missed this, he thought as he thoroughly enjoyed waking up Hermione and Mallory, who shared the bed in honor of her news. Then again, it was her turn anyway.

Luna and the Longbottoms joined Harry and his women for breakfast. It would be several days before the Third Floor was ready for House Longbottom so until then they all dined together. Neville and Susan would spend at least part of the day with the older Longbottoms going through the possessions that had been retrieved from their respective homes to decide what would be used to furnish and decorate their private apartments once the apartments were ready.

Minerva would be spending much of the day at Hogwarts clearing out her office and completing what little paperwork remained for her in the days before her retirement. She was scheduled to retire immediately after the reading of Sirius Black's Will, which was in a week. She was required to attend not because she was a beneficiary,

but rather as the representative of Hogwarts. This was required as the primary beneficiary was still technically a student.

Dumbledore would be there as well, but only in his capacity as Head of the Wizengamot as the designation of a new Lord Black carried with it a seat and scores of votes in the Assembly. Because the Will affected one of the last Ancient and Noble Houses, the new Deputy Director of Magical Law enforcement, Kingsley Shacklebolt would also attend. Usually the Ministry was represented by the Minister of Magic, but the politics following the debacle for the Ministry a few weeks earlier - namely the unequivocal return of Voldemort - precluded that. The Director was also disqualified as Arthur Weasley was named in the Will.

Towards the end of breakfast, Minerva pulled some enveloped from her robes and started handing them out without a word. Harry, Hermione, Neville, Susan and Daphne each received one.

“Is th-this what I think it is?” Hermione asked.

“Picked them up at Hogwarts yesterday,” Minerva said. “They are to be sent out in a few weeks but as the normal post-owls from Britain cannot find this place, I decided to deliver your O.W.L. results as soon as I could.

The five teens paled and Hermione’s hands were visible shaking. “Oh no,” she said not seeing the smirk on Minerva’s face.

“I’m sure you did fine,” Harry whispered.

“But there were so many questions that I was not happy with my answers...”

“Hermione,” Harry said soothingly, “you say that after every exam and you always get top marks. Are you going to open it?”

“Afraid,” she whispered.

Harry shrugged and opened his. He was no longer really worried for many reasons, not the least of which being his education and training would continue regardless of his marks. Still, he hoped he did okay. He began to read:

## ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS

Student: Harry James Potter

School: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Passing Grades / Raw Score / Mark / O.W.L.s

Outstanding / 9.0 or greater / O / 3

Exceeds Expectations / 7.5 - 8.9 / EE / 2

Acceptable / 6.0 - 7.4 / A / 1

Failing Grades / Raw Score / Mark

Poor / 4.5 - 5.9 / P

Dreadful / 3.0 - 4.4 / D

Troll / Less than 3.0 / T

Students who score a Poor are allowed to take intensive remedial studies and may test again at the end of the next term. Students with Dreadfuls in core courses (Herbology, Potions, Charms, Transfiguration, Defense) must take remedial studies until they pass. Students with Trolls are not allowed remediation.

Exams may have both a written and a practical exam, each scored separately. The two scores are added up and divided by two to create the overall raw score. Other marks that may appear are:

H: Honors Level - Highest score in exam group

WD: With Distinction - scores over 10.0

N: No examination offered

X: Did not take exam

I: Incomplete examination

Raw Score and Marks Denotes Theory/Practical/Overall

Course: Raw Scores - Marks - O.W.L.s

Ancient Runes: X

Arithmancy: X

Astronomy: 7.8/6.2/7.0 - EE/A/A - 1

Care of Magical Creatures: 9.4/9.0/9.2 - O/O/O - 3

Charms: 8.8/9.6/9.2 - EE/O/O / 3

DADA: 10.2/10.4/10.3 - O/O/O/H - 3

Divination: 7.0/4.6/5.3 - A/P/P - 0

Herbology: 8.5/8.7/8.6 - EE/EE/EE - 2

History of Magic: 4.0/N/4.0 - D/N/D - 0

Muggle Studies: X

Potions: 8.8/9.6/9.2 - EE/O/O - 3

Transfiguration: 9.2/9.2/9.2 - O/O/O - 3

7/9 O.W.L.s / 1 with Honors, 4 O's, 1 EE, 1 A Total: 18

Ranking: 24/41 Hogwarts.

291/535 Nationally

As Harry read he was actually pleased. He knew he failed history and divination and really did not care. The Outstanding in Defense was almost expected, but with Honors? That meant he was the best in the country! Outstandings in Charms and Transfiguration were surprises but the Outstanding in Potions was a shock. Everyone could see him beaming until he reached the bottom of the page. He ranked 24th in his class at Hogwarts. That was the bottom half! His face fell.

“Harry? What’s the matter?” Hermione asked.

Harry handed his sheet to Minerva. “I bombed,” he said sadly.

Minerva had already seen the results for Harry’s entire class. She had not actually memorized them, but she had brought a summary of them back with her. She looked at Harry’s complete marks for the first time.

“These are quite exceptional, Harry,” she said. “Honors in Defense, that’s amazing! It means you had the highest score in the entire

country! Outstandings in Care, Charms, Potions and Transfiguration - to be honest I would not have foreseen the latter two at all. Well done!"

"But I'm in the bottom half of the class!" Harry protested.

"Ah! Yes, well..."

"I mean with five O's, shouldn't I be higher?"

"You failed an O.W.L." McGonagall said.

"So?"

"The ranking system ranks all students who do not fail above all of those who do regardless of marks. You fail one O.W.L. and you're ranked behind students who passed but barely passed all of their O.W.L.s."

"But that's not fair!" Hermione protested.

"Pureblood thing," Daphne said.

"What do you mean?"

"The system is designed to make marginally magical Purebloods look good," Daphne said. "A pureblood who takes the minimum six O.W.L.s and passes all of them barely is ranked ahead of anyone who fails any O.W.L., even the ones who took all twelve and got Outstandings on all but the one they failed. My Daddy told me that History of Magic was designed to favor the Purebloods as the Ministry sends Pureblood families course materials and cheat sheets as soon as their son or daughter is eight."

"So we're set up to fail?"

"In a manner of speaking, yes."

“Just how bad is it?” Harry asked.

“Four Slytherins beat you in ranking, Harry,” Minerva said. “Daphne here was one, but she clobbered you fair and square. The other three are only ahead of you because they passed all their O.W.L.s. Ranking is based upon points earned. You earn three for each Outstanding, two for each Exceeds Expectations and one for each Acceptable. You get no bonuses for qualifying for N.E.W.T. level courses or for With Distinction or Honors level scores.

“Harry scored 18 points and qualified for N.E.W.T.s in six courses. He received honors in Defense meaning he was number one in the entire country in that subject. Actually, his score was the highest ever recorded. He should get credit for those accomplishments and rank above lesser mortals who did not achieve as much.

“Milicent Bulstrode, Draco Malfoy, and Pansy Parkinson all rank above him in class standing, but were nowhere near as competitive.

“Ms. Parkinson was the second best Slytherin with 16 points. She qualified for five N.E.W.T. level courses, but not in Potions as she had no Outstandings at all. Mr. Malfoy barely managed an Outstanding in Potions, his only one. He qualified N.E.W.T. level in four other courses. He had 13 points. Ms. Bulstrode had thirteen points and is only qualified to study for her History N.E.W.T.s.”

“That’s so unfair!” Hermione said. “Harry did way better.”

“I agree,” McGonagall said. “By points alone, Harry should rank 12th. If we give weight to his N.E.W.T. qualifications and his Honors, he should rank 7th in the class. Still, he’s behind the rest of you lot.”

“Really?” Neville asked in surprise.

“Really,” Minerva said. “You were a most pleasant surprise, Neville. Honors in Herbology, Outstandings in Runes, Care and Defense. Exceeds Expectations in Astronomy, Charms, History, Potions and much to my pleasant surprise Transfiguration. You even got an Outstanding on the Transfiguration Practical. You could sit for

N.E.W.T.s at Hogwarts in everything except Potions. Eighth in the class! Good job!"

"Hold on," Harry said. "Didn't you take Divination?"

"The class," Neville said. "Not the exam."

"Why not?"

"It was only an elective and I didn't understand any of it. You're not required to sit for O.W.L.s in elective courses."

"Oh." Harry thought for a moment. "Skiving off Divination would not have helped me either as I still failed History of Magic," he added with a sigh.

Neville passed around his exam results.

## ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS

Student: Neville Algecyrus Longbottom

School: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Course: Raw Scores – Marks - O.W.L.s

Ancient Runes: 9.1/9.2/9.1 - O/O/O - 3

Arithmancy: X

Astronomy: 8.7/8.5/8.6 - EE/EE/EE - 2

Care of Magical Creatures: 9.2/9.0/9.1 - O/O/O - 3

Charms: 8.5/7.9/8.2 - EE/EE/EE - 2

DADA: 9.6/10.2/9.8 - O/O/O - 3

Divination: X

Herbology: 10.4/10.2/10.3 - O/O/O/H - 3

History of Magic: 7.6/N/7.6 - EE/N/EE - 2

Muggle Studies: X

Potions: 8.2/7.5/7.9 - EE/EE/EE - 2

Transfiguration: 8.0/9.2/8.6 - EE/O/EE - 2

9/9 O.W.L.s / 1 with Honors, 3 O, 5 EE / Total: 22

Rankings: 8/41 Hogarts.  
63/535 Nationally.

“He can’t take N.E.W.T. level Potions?” Frank asked. “But he had an Exceeds in Potions,” Frank said. “Exceeds means N.E.W.T.s!”

“Professor Snape is the Potions Professor and only accepts Outstandings for N.E.W.T. level training,” Minerva sighed.

“What a load of Dragon shit!”

“Frank!” Alice scolded.

“Alice, neither of us got O’s in Potions. Without N.E.W.T. Potions we could not have become Aurors! And this Snape cretin! Only Outstandings? What’s that about? No school requires Outstandings for N.E.W.T.s! Bet the bastard is related to Severus the Death Eater.”

“Actually,” Harry said, “it is Severus the Death Eater.”

“He’s allowed to teach children?” Alice shrieked. “Does Dumbledore know he’s a Death Eater?”

Minerva nodded.

“Does he know how Severus got his Mark?”

“I don’t,” Minerva admitted.

“He killed five Muggle families after raping every girl under the age of sixteen! He’s into children!”

“That explains things,” Daphne said.

“How so,” Minerva asked.



“If you lose your virginity in Slytherin, you are expected to service our Head of House at least until your sixteenth birthday.”

“But that’s...” Alice started.

“Evil?” Astoria said. “The greasy bastard was a Death Eater and has been promoting the cause of his Dark Lord. Not outside Slytherin of course. But inside? Guys are expected to take the Dark Mark one day. Ever since He came back. Us witches? We are expected to marry them and do their bidding. Gang raping us is considered training. Sissy and I avoided that. When we bonded with Harry, he was our first time and considering our alternatives, it was all a Slytherin girl could hope and pray for. We are not slaves nor whores with Harry. We know we never will be. When our time came to bond with him if it was then our choice we would have done so. Had the Consort Bond been available to us, we would have offered ourselves to him of our own free will.”

“Being a witch in Slytherin House is no better than being the worst sort of Concubine,” Daphne added. “Most are little more than House Whores by the end of Third Year. If the witch is betrothed, she is expected to sleep with her betrothed and is usually left alone. Then again, her betrothed can whore her out, as Draco has with Pansy.

“When I learned I had been sold to Lord Black, I was terrified both for my self and for my sister. We thought that Draco Malfoy was to be the next Lord Black. When I learned Lord Black was actually Harry, I was relieved. I knew he would not be like that. And he is not. With Harry, my sister and I are treated as human beings. As a witch in Slytherin, we were viewed as little more than whores.”

“I’m sorry,” Minerva said. “If I had known. If one of you had come forward...”

“It’s been like that for ages,” Amber said. “It was like that when I was in school, although our Head of House was not involved. Good thing too. Slughorn was a walrus.”

“Besides,” Daphne added. “We learn our first day that’s what’s ultimately expected. First day back, the Prefects gathered all first year girls to watch the boys deflower an older one. We are warned that we can give it up willingly, or that was going to happen to us after our O.W.L.s. Pansy was the first in our year. Draco took her at the end of Second Year and then she put on a show and did it with Crabbe, Goyle and all the male prefects and Quidditch players. She started taking private lessons from Snape the next year ‘til he tired of her.”

“Snape should be fired,” Susan said.

“You think Dumbledore is going to give up his pet Snake?” Daphne said. “Dumbledore knows what’s going on, I’m sure of it. Besides, none of that matters anymore as Story and I are never going back.” With that, Daphne defiantly opened her envelop and read her marks. “Wow!”

## ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS

Student: Daphne Renee Greengrass

School: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Course: Raw Scores – Marks - O.W.L.s

Ancient Runes: 10.0/10.2/10.1 - O/O/O/WD - 3

Arithmancy: 10.5/N/10.5 - O/N/O/H - 3

Astronomy: 9.8/9.8/9.8 - O/O/O - 3

Care of Magical Creatures: X

Charms: 10.2/10.0/10.1 - O/O/O/WD - 3

DADA: 8.2/8.6/8.4 - EE/EE/EE - 2

Divination: X

Herbology: 8.5/8.9/8.7 - EE/EE/EE - 2

History of Magic: 8.2/N/8.2 - EE/N/EE - 2

Muggle Studies: 7.2/N/7.2 - A/N/A - 1

Potions: 10.2/10.4/10.3 - O/O/O/WD - 3

Transfiguration: 9.8/9.6/9.7 - O/O/O - 3

10/10 O.W.L.s / 1 with Honors, 3 with Distinction, 2 O, 3 EE, 1 A /  
Total: 25

Rankings: 5/41 Hogwarts  
42/525 Nationally.

“Honors in Arithmancy!” she began.

“Damn,” Hermione grumped.

“With Distinctions in Runes, Charms and Potions! Outstandings in Astronomy and Transfiguration! Exceeds in Defense, Herbology and History! Acceptable in Muggle Studies. Oh well, I didn’t think that course as all that good really. These are great.”

“Highest in Slytherin in years,” Minerva said. “She ranks fifth in the class.”

“Good job, Sis,” Astoria said. Everyone agreed and Daphne actually blushed from the praise.

“I’m tied with her,” Susan said excitedly! “Wow! But really, though, she should be ahead of me.”

“Why’s that ?” Neville asked.

“She got one Honors and I got none and she has one more With Distinction than I do.”

Susan then passed around her results.

## ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS

Student: Susan Marie Bones

School: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Course: Raw Scores – Marks - O.W.L.s

Ancient Runes: 9.0/9.8/9.4 - O/O/O - 3

Arithmancy: 8.6/N/8.6 - EE/N/EE - 2

Astronomy: 8.8/9.4/9.1 - EE/O/O - 3

Care of Magical Creatures: X  
Charms: 10.1/10.3/10.2 - O/O/O/WD - 3  
DADA: 9.2/9.2/9.2 - O/O/O - 3  
Divination: X  
Herbology: 8.2/8.6/8.4 - EE/EE/EE - 2  
History of Magic: 7.0/N/7.0 - A/N/A - 1  
Muggle Studies: 9.4/N/9.4 - O/N/O - 3  
Potions: 7.8/8.1/7.9 - EE/EE/EE - 2  
Transfiguration: 9.8/10.3/10.1 - O/O/O/WD - 3

11/11 O.W.L.s / 2 with Distinction, 5 O, 3 EE, 1 A / Total: 25

Rankings: 5/41 Hogarts.  
42/535 Nationally.

“Those are excellent marks,” Minerva said, “you should be proud of them, Lady Longbottom.”

It was the first time anyone had addressed her as that and it was just a little embarrassing, but Susan liked it.

“Thanks,” she said softly.

“Highest in Hufflepuff, if you must know.”

“Really?”

“Really.”

Susan started to cry silently.

“What’s wrong, Love,” Neville asked.

“Auntie would have been so proud,” she whimpered. “I wish she was still...” She began to cry as Neville pulled her into a hug.

“She would have been so proud,” Neville said. “I am. Although your Herbology score,” he added to lighten the mood.

“You were always better than me at that, Nev,” she said more calm. “You got Honors! I would never have done as well as I did without your help. Thank you, Love.”

“You’re welcome. I am always proud of you by the way. Always have been. You’re my wife and best friend and those are forever and I consider myself lucky to have you in my life.”

“Oh Neville,” Susan sighed before launching herself into a long and slow kiss. “You’re SO getting shagged for that,” she whispered when the kiss finally broke.

“Hermione,” Harry asked, “are you going to look at your marks?”

Expressionless, Hermione opened the envelop and read her marks.

## ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL EXAMINATION RESULTS

Student: Hermione Jane Granger

School: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Course: Raw Scores – Marks - O.W.L.s

Ancient Runes: 9.8/10.4/10.2 - O/O/O/H - 3

Arithmancy: 10.1/N/10.1 - O/N/O/WD - 3

Astronomy: 9.8/10.0/9.9 - O/O/O - 3

Care of Magical Creatures: 9.6/9.8/9.7 - O/O/O - 3

Charms: 10.2/10.6/10.4 - O/O/O/H - 3

DADA: 9.4/9.6/9.5 - O/O/O - 3

Divination: X

Herbology: 10.2/10.0/10.1 - O/O/O/WD - 3

History of Magic: 10.2/N/10.2 - O/N/O/WD - 3

Muggle Studies : X

Potions: 9.9/10.3/10.1 - O/O/O/WD - 3

Transfiguration: 10.3/10.7/10.5 - O/O/O/H - 3

10/10 O.W.L.s / 3 O with Honors, 4 with Distinction, 3 O / Total: 30

Rankings: 1/41 Hogarts.

1/535 Nationally.

Without any sign of a reaction, she then quietly handed her marks over to Minerva. "I should have done better," she said.

Minerva read the marks herself. She already knew how Hermione had done but had not memorized the report.

"These are exceptional," Minerva said. "Honors in Runes, Charms and Transfiguration. You do realize that aside from you, only one other person in the history of O.W.L. Exams managed three Honors and that was Dumbledore. With Distinctions in Arthrimancy, Herbology, History and Potions. Outstandings in Astronomy, Care and Defense. I'm not sure how you could have done any better considering your marks are the highest in the country."

"I could have gotten more With Distinctions," Hermione replied.

"Considering they were not available in Astronomy or Care, the fact that you only missed one..."

"In Defense," Hermione said. "That damned Boggart again!"

"Minerva again told you about failing all your classes?" Harry asked.

"N-no," Hermione said. "This one was m-much worse." There was pain in her voice. "It was you Harry. You telling be you could never love me."

Harry pulled her into a hug. "Guess it's a good thing that it was only a boggart."

"Yeah."

"So what would you say if I took you back to our room and showed you just how wrong that boggart was?"

"Sounds like a plan," Hermione said.

Later that morning when Harry and Hermione were regrettably dressed again, Harry sat in his Study looking through this week's version of the Concubine Catalog. Hermione was sitting across from him going over some of her research notes.

"Hermione? We have a problem."

"Oh?"

"The Auction Catalog..." Harry began.

"Don't tell me I'm still in it!"

"You're not. Neither is Clarice for that matter. No that's not it."

"Then what's the problem?"

"There are a lot of new lots it seems, all of them first timers."

"How many?"

"Twenty-two all told."

"That bastard," Hermione scowled.

Harry nodded in agreement. "Ranging in age from 12 to 17. Most are either Muggle Borns or have no Magical Guardian, although there are a few who look like they may be in a similar situation as Daphne and Story were."

"This is just sick," Hermione said.

"And it's a problem," Harry agreed. "My plan was to buy all the first timers. Taking you and Clarice off the market, that would have been twelve total. That's all there were a week ago. Now assuming Luna asks to become Lady Black and we take Ginny, that gives me eight. I only have room for twelve according to your calculations. Even then, twenty women is going to be difficult to manage."

“All a question of scheduling, Dear,” Hermione said with a smile. It was unspoken, but Harry knew who would be working on the schedules in time. “Thirty, though, that would be a bit much.”

“I’d say twenty is pushing it, Hermione. But I don’t want ten of these girls to suffer just because I can’t handle them.”

“There’s always Neville,” Hermione suggested.

“That’s what I was thinking too.”

“He’ll need to buy twelve, I think.”

“Why?”

“Numbers again. With Susan and Amber that’ll make fourteen which is a powerful number, fifteen including him and that’s another powerful number.”

“That’s two more than available and according to Remus, there should be no additions to the lots between now and the Auction. Deletions are possible. But even though the book should be closed for any additions, it’s still possible.”

“Have any thoughts Love?” Hermione asked.

“Yes. My thinking is this. I want balance between my Houses. Ideally that means one Consort, two Matrons, two Attendants and balance between those bought as opposed to acquired.”

“Okay, I’ll bite. What does that mean?”

“You and hopefully Luna chose to bind with me. I acquired three witches from inheritance and should I take Ginny, she’ll be an acquisition and not a purchase. That’s four Concubines by acquisition. I was thinking as to the rest, two witches each from each House at



Hogwarts. I already have the Slytherins, so that means two more from Gryffindor, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw.”

“You’re still six short, Love.”

“There are five girls from other schools who are first timers. Two each from St. Patrick’s in Ireland and St. George’s in London. One of the St. George’s girls is your friend Sally Anne Perks. There’s one from St. Andrew’s in Scotland and there happens to be a quite fetching young lass who is used who also went there. That would give us two from each other school on the list and would give me four ‘used’ witches, two in each House.”

“Balance?”

“Balance. Ideally House Potter and House Black will be almost identical. One Consort, two ‘used’ Concubines, two acquired, seven purchased, and those seven will be balanced as well. One from each Hogwarts house and one from each of the other schools. Of course, all this falls apart if ten witches get sent to hell because I cannot place them.”

“So we talk to Neville, then.”

“And Susan.”

Hermione nodded in agreement.

“And assuming they come onboard, that brings up my second problem.”

“And that is?”

“Space. Hermione this Manor is huge but can you really see thirty-five families living here comfortably?”

“I’m sure we have plenty of room.”

“Now. Mallory’s pregnant. You, Susan, Minerva, Amber, Dora and Daphne are all trying. There’s nothing that says that Frank and Alice cannot and will not have another child. We know Story wants children eventually. Something tells me that most if not all the others will too in time. House Longbottom could well be here for years. That’s thirty-four witches between Neville and me. If you figure children, well do the math. Can we fit well over a hundred people in this Manor comfortably?”

“Even if you subdivided the upper floors, Harry, you do know that the flats would be larger than my parent’s place. I don’t see a problem.”

“I’ll concede that point, Hermione. But I want better for my family than I had. I have no excuse since money is not an object.”

“Expand the Manor?”

“In a manner of speaking,” Harry said earning a groan from Hermione at the unintended pun. “Actually, I am thinking of building two more.”

“Where?”

“Either side of the Pitch.” Harry called the huge lawn surrounded by the elliptical drive at the front of the Manor ‘The Pitch’ as it happened to be the same size and shape as a Quidditch Pitch. “On the south side, nearest to Neville and Susan’s Lake and Bonding Tree, I will build Longbottom House. This will be theirs while they remain in exile and will be large enough for Neville and his entire family with a ground floor of public apartments like we have here, although not as large. On the north side will be Black House, which will house my family. Ten of my girls will raise their children there, the other ten here. This floor will be for me and my Consorts and our children. Four of my women and their families will occupy the second floor and four the third.”

“Any other grandiose plans,” Hermione said trying to hide her concern about spending.

“I spoke with Darda earlier. Longbottom House could be built and ready by early September. Black House a little later. And that’s with my other plans in play.”

“Do tell,” she said with a hint of sarcasm.

“There’s a large lake to the northeast. I plan to build a hotel there for guests. I intend to at least allow family to visit their daughters and that’s where they can stay. But, as I see the war will be hardest on Muggle Borns and their families, I intend to invite them to move here to Charenwell. I will build a city for them on the South Coast in the undeveloped regions. I will open the lands to farming and such aside from the wildlife reserve, of course. I figure we could well double the population of this country should the Muggle Borns and their families move here.”

“How many and what will they do for a living?”

“At least double the current population,” Harry said, “and the new city will be a manufacturing center as I see it.”

“Of what?”

“We feed three times our population as it now stands. Double the acreage and we feed six times that. But we are a net importer of manufactured goods both magical and Muggle. I doubt we can really compete with the Muggles, but the magicals? With the right people, we could become a net exporter period. That means jobs and good incomes for all. Of course, it also means that if I am successful, Charenwell’s population might actually be larger than that of Magical Britain in a few years time. That too plays into my plan.”

“How so?”

“I want to raise an army, Hermione. An army to defend Charewell if need be, but one that can take back magical Britain when it falls to the Purebloods. As it stands, I can raise three thousand troops if need be. Double the population, and I can more than double that.

Particularly if I include non-magicals. You realize that Voldemort nearly took it all with only about five hundred Death Eaters and supporters? Maybe even less? You think he could stand an invasion from more than ten times that number?"

"So you really are planning to go to war?"

"Eventually it will be necessary for all. I would rather lead a magical army against my magical homeland than to allow the Muggles to engage. You should know where that might lead."

Hermione nodded. "Genocide."

"In all probability."

"How long to raise this army?"

"Two years minimum, I figure and that assumes cooperation with Her Majesty's government."

"For what?"

"Arms, for one. I'm not going to teach Unfogivables. But there are no effective magical defenses to guns and bombs. And they are just as lethal for us as they are for Muggles."

"Is that the only reason? You do realize using a gun as a wizard is illegal in Britain?"

"For the citizens of that country. We, however, will be an invading army. Foreigners. As for why guns? In addition to being lethal, they have much longer range. Spells are ineffective beyond about twenty or thirty meters and hard to aim accurately beyond ten. Rifles, however, are lethal at well beyond four hundred meters and accurate out to four hundred meters with standard training. I would prefer to kill them at a range where they cannot harm us whenever possible."

"They'll say we're not fighting fair."

“And killing innocent men, women and children is?”

“Point taken.”

“I hate to say it, but this is one war where we must win.”

Hermione nodded in agreement. “And you think you can get them? And the training?”

“Don’t know, Love. We’ll make do if we cannot, but I’d rather go in with an overwhelming force. Need to talk to Sir Stephen about the possibilities and such.”

“And how long do you think Magical Britain can hold out in the meantime while you are raising this army of yours?”

“If I do nothing, it will fall within a year or so. But, if I play the cards I hold, I can set both the Old Man and Voldie back a year or more by depriving them of their money. It will also hurt the Ministry, but not as much. That should give us time to prepare.”

Remus arrived right before lunchtime and was pulled into a conversation with his old friends, the Longbottoms.

“So Moony, Lord Mayor is it?” Frank asked. “And just what is that?”

“Similar to the Minister for Magic,” Remus said.

“And do they know?”

“Know what?”

“Do the people here know about your condition?”

“As in that I am a Werewolf?”

Frank and Alice nodded.

“They’ve known for years.”

“And still you’re Lord Mayor?”

“It’s not an issue here,” Remus said. “In Britain, I am considered a Dark Creature and my kind is regulated by the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. You get bitten there and you cease to be human in the eyes of the law. Here, my condition is considered a medical condition and it is regulated by our Board of Health and Welfare. There are twenty-five Weres in this country. We all have jobs. Many of us have families. We all get Wolvesbane Potion courtesy of the government at no cost and that policy predates my tenure as Lord Mayor by almost a decade. Each full moon, we gather at the Wereclub, members only, exclusive to Weres and spend the full moon there. It’s actually rather fun sitting around howling at the moon all night.” Remus chuckled.

“The only way we can get into trouble is to bite someone. There hasn’t been a biting here in over a century.”

“Then where do the Weres come from? Are they born?” Alice said. “We’ve been told that is the reason Weres are not allowed to marry or have children because the children would be Werewolves too.”

“Rubbish,” Remus said. “There is no proof of that. In fact quite the opposite is true. There have been many Weres, men and women, who have had children here and not one child became a Were.”

“Then where did they come from?”

“With the exception of myself, every Were in Charenwell was born here and went to Britain either for school or work. That’s where they were bitten. Once bitten, they returned here where they can live out normal lives.”

“And you?”

“I’ve lived here since the summer following my First Year at Hogwarts. James’s family took me in.”

“But you’ve spent a lot of time in Britain.”

“Yes. I went to school there and later I joined the fight against Voldemort. Aside from those activities, I’ve lived here. Charenwell is my home now. And now that I am joining a different fight against Voldemort, I doubt I’ll be heading back across the water anytime soon.”

Remus then began telling the Longbottoms about the real Albus Dumbledore. The shocking news left them speechless until sometime after lunch. Quietly, they were beginning to believe that Harry and this Charenwell might be the only real hope for their former home.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16(Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33(SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).



## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX: LUNA

THURSDAY, JULY 4, 1996 - Potter Manor

Luna Lovegood was fifteen years old. She had gone unnoticed by many her four years at Hogwarts. Had anyone paid attention to her as she matured into a young woman, they would have noticed she was actually quite attractive. She was 5'5" tall with a petite but not unpleasing figure and long, blonde hair. She had large pale blue eyes that the right boy might find captivating. However few looked and the only comments she had ever received about her physical appearance is how she always looked dazed and confused. She was anything but that. Highly intelligent she was also extremely perceptive and a keen observer of the world around her. She probably knew more about more people at Hogwarts than anyone and was one of the few if only people who would not have surprised that Neville and Susan were a couple. But, since she did not share her insights with just anyone, nobody seemed to notice or give her a second thought.

Luna was a Pureblood witch. Her father and mother were both from two of the oldest magical families in Britain and could trace their ancestors back to the time of the Druids, long before the wand wavers from southern Europe "invaded" following the Roman conquest almost two thousand years earlier. As her family were of Druidic and not Roman origin, they had retained their Druidic practices, which served them well during the Middle Ages. Druids practiced ritual magic and as many rituals could be done in very small groups or even alone, they had been largely invisible to the persecutions that befell the wand wavers at the hands of Christianity. That is not to say Druids never used wands. These days everyone did. The Druids, however, did not rely on wands. They were famed potioners and had blended into Muggle culture as Healers of the sick with herbal remedies that did not offend the Church.

Luna was an only child, which while not rare amongst Purebloods, was rare in that she was a witch and not a wizard. Most Purebloods only had daughters until they produced an heir and if the heir was a first born, many families stopped. There were exceptions. In the previous generation, the Lestrangle family had two boys, but that was because they were twins. The Blacks had two as well, but the second

was born because the first born had been very sickly as an infant and Sirius Black's parents had feared he would not live to reach his majority. Luna had no siblings. When she was seven years old she learned why. Druidic families tended to be large by Pureblood standards. They did not distinguish between sons and daughters but based their family sized upon numerology and omens. Luna was born on the Autumnal Equinox. This was one of the four most sacred days in Druidic Culture and to sully a family with more children after one had been born under a ritual moon was considered to be an ill omen for the entire clan.

Luna knew when she entered Hogwarts she was from one of only two Pureblood Druidic families with children of school age. Had she told anyone this, others would have guessed the Weasleys were Druidic due to the large number of children. But this was not the case. The Weasley line was relatively new to Britain having arrived following the Norman conquest. Their large family came from a desire for a shot at some wealth. Sons of an impoverished Pureblood line rarely married up. Daughters, however, did if they were desirable. The Weasleys proliferation was solely due to the desire to have a daughter who could be married off into a wealthy House and improve the lot for the entire family. After six sons, they finally had their commodity in their youngest, a daughter.

The Potters, Blacks and Longbottoms were derived from Druidic lines, but had abandoned those practices over a thousand years earlier and were not considered Druidic by the true Druidic lines. Most "purebloods" were anything but. Most of the Ancient and Noble Houses did not come into existence until the tenth century and many were of Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking decent. Most of today's Purebloods would be hard pressed to show they were not from Muggle Born stock if you went back far enough, say four generations to find the first Muggle Born ancestor.

The Druidic subculture tended to be Pureblood by association as opposed to design. As Druids, they had a keen and abiding respect for everything in Creation, and that included Muggles. They had no qualms or prejudices that would deter them from bonding with Muggles and Muggle Borns. Their beliefs, however, made such matches less likely. Still, while the "newer" Purebloods arranged

marriages, Druids preferred love matches as that was powerful magic. As their generations before them, Luna's parents were Husband and Consort bound in the Druidic sex rite, one of the few that had somewhat wide spread acceptance in Magical wand waving Britain, namely as a means to avoid unwanted marriages or bonds.

The only other Pureblood Druidic family with children at Hogwarts that Luna knew of were the Greengrasses. They were not close nor even related, unless you went far enough back say several centuries at least. There were similarities between Luna and the two Greengrass girls who were attending Hogwarts, most notably that they were outcasts. Luna knew the reasons were different. As Druids, neither she nor the Greengrass sisters were interested in arranged marriages or a physical relationship outside of the Consort bond, as the Druidic Bonding Rite was called. The concept of a Love Match that was the prerequisite for the Consort Bond was foreign to most "recent immigrants" and that meant most Purebloods, especially those who tended to be sorted into Slytherin House. The Greengrass girls were outcasts because they refused to behave like good Slytherins and spread their legs for their Pureblood Slytherin boys. Luna was a Ravenclaw and was an outcast for entirely different reasons.

The Lovegoods were independently wealthy, a fact that was not widely known. They never flaunted their wealth and even then, compared to families like the Blacks and Potters, they were not that wealthy at all. However, neither of her parents had to work for a living. Her father fancied himself a journalist and a naturalist. He ran his own weekly paper that was considered eccentric for the most part, but was a premier source of information on discoveries in the naturalist world. Most people missed the real scoops as he also published any rumor of a discovery and loved conspiracy theories. He never charged a Knut for his paper nor accepted any advertisements as he felt that sullied the integrity of his publication.

Luna's mother had been a spell crafter, one of the few good ones in Britain in that she actually invented new and useful spells on more than just the rare occasion and never by accident. As parents, they tried to raise her as best they could. They tried to instill in her a love of learning and an open mind to all the possibilities in life. They

encouraged her to have an imagination and to dream and to follow those wherever they led. They encouraged her to have friends and her best friend was a younger girl named Ginny Weasley who lived only over the hill from her. For the first nine years of her life, Luna was a very happy little girl.

When Luna was nine, her father left on an expedition to the Himalayas in search of fables magical beasts as he called them. He was only expected to be gone a couple of weeks but would be impossible to contact when he was away. He was then planning on taking his family to the Alps on a similar, yet far less dangerous or rustic expedition which Luna had been looking forward to for months.

Two days after he left, Luna was in her Mum's spell chamber watching as her Mum Mia crafted a new charm when things went horrible wrong. There was an explosion. Luna was protected by a powerful shielding ward, but the blast was so powerful that the shields failed and she was sprayed with shards of flying glass. In pain and bleeding, she entered the chamber to find her Mum dying and sat beside her as the light left her eyes forever. She sat beside her dead mother for over two days waiting and hoping her Mum was just knocked out. Ginny's Mum finally found her when Luna had failed to appear for Ginny's picnic the day before and the Lovegoods had failed to answer several Floo calls. Luna would spend the next week in the hospital recovering from her injuries. Both she and her father missed her Mum's burial.

Luna loved her parents very much, but was always closer to her Mum. With her Mum's death, her lonely times began. Her father took the death particularly hard and was never the same afterwards. Formerly outgoing, he became mostly a recluse and seldom left his print shop unless it was to go on an expedition with his daughter. He became overly protective of Luna in many ways and Luna would not see her friend Ginny again for over two years and then only because Luna had to go to Hogwarts. In many ways, her father fell into a fantasy world surrounded by creatures that only he could see and dragged his daughter in with him. She didn't mind. The mythical world she fell into helped her forget the pain.

She entered Hogwarts in September 1992 the oldest student in her year. She was eleven, like all the others, but turned twelve barely three weeks later. She was very bright and maybe even gifted, but she brought her safe fantasy world with her. Sorted into Ravenclaw, she was immediately an outcast and was picked on continually by her own housemates. In her made up world of Nargles and Snorkacks, she could ignore it and ignore the fact that she had no friends at least for a time. And she was in a perfect position to observe as no one paid her a mind at all. Still, the part of her that remained in the real world was lonely and sad and desperately wanted at least one friend.

November 1st of her Third Year was when she finally started making a real friend. Her new friend was her opposite in many ways. They both were very smart and studious people. But if Luna was the philosopher, her new friend was a scientist. If her new friend believed in facts and logic, Luna believed in faith and inspiration. Luna felt that they complimented each other, each having strengths that filled the other's weaknesses. And making this new friend was easy, really. Luna did what came naturally to her, she believed. She believed her friend that Harry Potter had not tried to enter that silly Tournament nor had any intention of doing so. For a time, Luna, her new friend Hermione Granger and Hermione's friend Harry Potter were the only students in the school who believed what was in fact true. In time Luna came to trust Hermione and would tell her her secrets. Hermione would keep her secrets safe.

And Luna had a secret, two actually. Few knew her mother had died and that she had seen the death and had sat beside her mother in the ruins of her home for over two days. Hermione was one of the few. She never talked about this with others as she did not want their pity or ridicule for such a thing. She also had a rare gift. A magical gift so rare that her father told her to tell no one unless they were absolutely trust worthy because her father was certain that if word got out, she would be taken into the Department of Mysteries and be slowly tortured in medical experiments. Then again, when her father had told her this it was after her mother had died and he had moved on from being marginally eccentric to nearly certifiable.

Luna's magical gift was exceedingly rare but not unheard of. She had qualities similar to both the Seer and the Empath and yet was neither.

A Seer could see the future, or at least a future a person might experience or avoid and convey that vision in a way so that the person could, in theory, attain or avoid it. An Empath could sense another person's emotional state at any given time.

Luna could "see" where a person was and where they were headed in the most general terms. She had to focus on the person to do this and she could only generalize if asked and if she was willing to reveal what her "seeing" saw. When she focused she really could not describe what she saw except by analogy. By analogy, she saw three colors associated with the person and where their life was and was headed within those colors. "Black" she associated with pain, loneliness, misery, despair and death. "White" was hope, love, happiness and life. "Grey" was somewhere in between. Most people were somewhere in the Grey. They had average lives and could expect more of the same absent some life altering experience that pushed them one way or the other. The Whites were always the fewest in number, but had become fewer and fewer in recent years. The Blacks were increasing.

Through her observations she learned that these states were not constant. People shifted toward White or Black all the time. She also learned that she could remember the person's "Pre-shift" reading and apply known variables to determine with some accuracy the cause of the shift. The problem was that for many Shifts, the cause could not be determined. Some were easy. A woman finds her man and her life immediately shifts towards the "White" side of the ledger. Deaths in the family usually shifted towards the "Black," but neither were guaranteed reactions. She also learned that sometimes, if she thought and meditated upon it long enough, she could sense things that might shift a life one way or the other even if they had not yet occurred. It was rare when it did happen as no one could really predict the future in her opinion. But certain trends could be countered and sometimes the counter was one that one could see without being a Seer.

Before her mother's death, and event she could not foresee, Luna's life ahead had been what she called "Grey Tending To White." Not a "Happily Ever After" as in tales, but better than most. After her Mum's death it was "Grey Tending To Black" or even "Borderline Black." She

knew her Mum's death was the trigger, but other factors pushed the line in the "Misery" direction. In her simulations her father's descent into fantasy, overprotective and yet aloof nature coupled with the loss of her connection to Ginny and people in general were all factors in the shift and most she could not have hoped to control at the time. When Hermione became her friend, Luna's scan had shifted to the "Right" or away from the "Black." Oddly, Hermione was a "Grey Tending to Black" too and her scan remained unchanged at the time.

The last two days had puzzled her and she had sat in her room while other sat with her alternating from crying for her father to thinking about all the shifts she had noticed since the Battle at the Department of Mysteries. Harry Potter's was the oddest. He had led them into that battle to save his Godfather who her friend Harry had thought was being tortured by the Enemy of all. His Godfather fell in the following fight. Luna was sure that Harry's signature would get darker having lost yet another parental figure and person who he cared for and who cared for him in his life. Yet the opposite happened. Despite his loss and surely his pain at such loss, his trend had shifted instantly to the "Right" or "White side of things. True, he was still more "Black" than "Grey," but it was a noticeable and a big shift. He was now roughly equal to Hermione in that regard.

When Luna next saw Harry and Hermione together several days had passed. She had known that Hermione had been in very serious condition and there had been concerns over whether or not she would survive. Luna could see that Harry and Hermione were now a couple and was happy for them. It had been rather obvious that if any two people deserved to be together, it was those two. What stunned her was there had been another shift to the right. Hermione was now more grey than white while Harry was all grey. She had never seen either of their projections without black in them. In fact, for the first time since when Voldemort had returned she viewed people whose projections were without black, including both Neville and Susan which she thought strange as they had just lost what family they had left. Even her own projection had shifted to the right despite losing her father.

She knew that the triggering event seemed to be the death of Sirius Black. She did not understand how this could be the catalyst for the

changes she had seen, but everything flowed from that event. Her gift could tell her how a person's life would progress if current conditions remained the same, but not exactly why an event changed things. Sometimes, she never even knew what the event was. All she could do to attempt to understand was to make inspired if not educated guesses.

When it came up in that evening's conversations that Hermione was Harry's Consort and Lady Potter but that Harry could still take another Consort as Lady Black, Luna started thinking. She knew a little about the bond, but not nearly enough. She knew it was based upon mutual love and affection and that it was the witch who asked the wizard and initiated the bonding and not the other way around. She did not know what the rite entailed. One thing was certain to her, for she had known this for months. She loved Harry. Maybe not the same way Hermione did, but she did love him. She knew Harry had feelings for her too, but what they were was a mystery.

If Hermione was Luna's first friend since age nine, Harry was the second. Their friendship had probably begun to form on the Hogwarts Express last September 1st. It had grown over the months and Luna had opened up to the kind and caring young man in a way she never opened up to anyone other than Hermione. When she was alone with either or both of them, the Loony Lovegood persona disappeared and the real Luna shown through and she knew it. With Hermione she could talk about girly things like emotions and such. With Harry, she could talk about the death of her mother and her loneliness. In a way they were all so similar and yet different. All had known rejection, heartache and loneliness in their lives. She and Hermione had known the love of their parents. She and Harry had lost parents. The more she thought about it over the year, the more she saw the three of them as three sides of a triangle that supported and complimented each other. Together even as friends they were far better off than apart.

She wondered what would happen to the three of their's projections if she became Lady Black and had meditated on this for hours. She also meditated on other "propects" for the position and the results surprised her. The most likely other prospect was Ginny Weasley. As Luna applied Ginny to her gift's equation, she saw everything shift to



black for all concerned. There were less drastic shifts towards the black if someone else became the Lady Black. But when Luna applied herself to the equation, there was a significant shift into the white for all concerned. Why?

Over the last two days, Luna had paid attention to what was being said around her even when no one knew she was listening. There was some sort of prophecy about Harry and the Dark Lord, one which could be interpreted as meaning Harry may have to die, but Luna knew prophecies were always vague. She then thought about the Harry that charged off into the Department of Mysteries and the Harry she now saw. Old Harry was ready and willing to die for his friends and those he loved. Luna was sure new Harry would too if need be, but there was a difference and Luna was all but certain of it. Old Harry saw no life after Voldemort. He would die because he had nothing really to live for. New Harry had a life after Voldemort. He had the love of his life for a consort and five other witches whom he seemed to care about and now a child on the way with more certain to come in the next few weeks. New Harry would want to win and live a long life with his new family.

And somehow, according to the shifts, Luna was supposed to be a part of that. But she did not really know how. As a Consort? Wife? Concubine? It seemed all those bonds were equally beneficial to the boy she loved. So it would really come down to what did she want? She knew that answer. As a Druidic there was only one answer. She wanted to be Luna Black, Lord Harry Potter Black's wife and Consort. She knew that she would never equal or exceed Hermione in Harry's heart, but she believed there was room enough for her as well. Still, she had no idea whether Harry saw that as her place in his life and was uncertain as to how to let him know she wanted that without getting too hurt if he rejected her. It was odd, she thought. For the first time in her life she was concerned about whether a boy liked her that way.

What really perplexed her was how complicated Harry's situation seemed. Hermione was his Potter Consort and there were two Potter Concubines, one having been briefly a Black Concubine. As Lord Black, he had three Concubines and no Consort. Some of the things she had heard suggested that this was just the beginning. There

would be more Concubines probably fairly soon. Were the Potter Concubines loyal to House Black? Were the Black Concubines loyal to House Potter? Could they betray each other without violating their bonds? Or were the loyalty bonds such that this was not possible? Luna knew Hermione was no one's fool and Harry was no slouch either. They would have seen this possibility and found some way to prevent friction between the Houses. But how? Luna had no idea.

Just the day before she was thinking about all of this: how important it was to her, Harry and everyone that she bonded with him, Harry's unusual family and how it worked, what was required for and from her to become a Consort and a myriad of other things. During the previous two days she had spent most of her time in her room, leaving it only for meals and for certain physical necessities. She had hardly spoke a word to anyone and they seemed to let her be in that regard. But she was rarely alone. Someone was almost always at her bedside to be with her, keep an eye on her and be there if she wanted to talk. They seemed to take turns trying to help her through this. Harry was often there, but so were all the others.

There was one constant companion. It was an orange colored cat looking creature, yet Luna knew it was no ordinary cat. It was at least part Kneazel. Luna knew who it was. It was Hermione's familiar Crookshanks. The cat was Luna's constant companion and never seemed to leave her side. Hermione had told her that "Crooks" had spent the first week here exploring the Manor and the grounds. Hermione felt that Crooks was making sure this was a safe place for his mistress. When Luna arrived, Crooks had taken on the role as Luna's guardian and companion because Luna needed Crooks more than Hermione did.

Yesterday afternoon, Astoria Greengrass was there. She seemed friendly enough and was kind enough not to try and draw Luna into a conversation. She seemed content to sit there and wait for Luna to re-enter the world and had said as much once. She sat beside Luna and was reading a book while Luna thought, cried, slept and pondered. When her time was up, she left with a soft word of encouragement, but left the book behind.

On Magical Bonds And Rites Under Druidic Tradition

By Armando Lovegood

1922

Luna knew of the author and the book. The author was her Great-great grandfather and the book was considered a prized heirloom at one time. It had been banned in magical Britain as it promoted heretical thoughts such as the notion that Purebloods were not superior to all other wizards and that wizards were not the superior race in the world, but merely one among equals, including the blasphemy that Muggles were their equals in all things. That was what she had been told, in any event. She skimmed through the Table of Contents and noted some chapters.

1. The Lie of Purebloods of Non-Druidic Tradition.
2. Arranged Marriage And The Plague on Magical Kind.
3. Why "Purebloods" Will Mean The End of Wizard Kind.
4. Why Muggles Ended Arranged Marriage And What We Should Learn From Their Example.
5. The Importance of Muggle Borns in Bonding and Life.
6. Mating and Children - The Importance of Blood Diversity.
7. Bonds That Strengthen Magic In General.
8. The Concubine Bond.
9. The Love Bonded Concubine.
10. The Consort Bond.
11. Bonding and the Head of Multiple Lines.
12. Bonding Amongst and Across Households.
13. The Sex Acts And Bonding
14. On the Importance of a Witch's Pleasure and Physical Intimacy.
15. Druidic Sex Rituals.

The last chapter having many subchapters.

Luna could see why this book was banned just by reading the Table of Contents. It clearly offended "polite" society on two levels. First of all, it clearly was an attack on the notion of blood purity. Second, it promoted sex for intimacy as well as procreation within one's "family." Pureblood males who did not own their own Concubines for sex usually mated with their wives and found sex through mistresses or bordellos. That was not to say all Purebloods were that way, but the

elitists tended to be that way and all would take offense at this book and what it promoted.

But then Luna was not typical Pureblood and given that Astoria was reading this book and there were strange tabs on several pages, Luna decided to read it too. She spent the next couple of hours reading about bonds and the rites both sexual and not that created them. Basically, she read Chapters 9 through 12 and reread the Chapter on Consort Bonds. Before she went to bed she knew she was going to ask Harry to take her as his Black Consort but she wanted to talk to Hermione first. She had never kissed a boy before (or a girl for that matter) much less been any more intimate and she was nervous about the prospect.

When Luna awoke that morning, there was a young, female elf in her room waiting for her. The Elf told Luna her name was Lima and she was assigned to look after Luna. She told Luna that she had laid out clothes for her that Luna was asked to wear to breakfast. Luna saw that there was new underwear, khaki slacks and a matching, short sleeved blouse made from heavy cotton and what looked like hiking boots. She knew these clothes had not come from her old home and wondered what the outfit was for. She put them on following her shower and went to breakfast with the others. She was surprised to see that Harry was dressed in matching attire and even more surprised to see that no one else was.

“Is there a reason you are dressed as I am?” Luna asked Harry as she sat down with her breakfast.

Harry nodded. “After breakfast, you and I are going to look for Snorkacks.”

“We are?”

“Yep.”

“That’s all we’re gonna do?”

“If that’s all you want to, yes.”

“You don’t expect to have sex with me?”

Damn was she forward, Harry thought. “No.”

“But you do with the others.”

“Because they want to, not because I expect them to. Besides, I am bound to all of them. Hermione is the one who decides that stuff.”

“Oh. Okay.”

Harry could not tell, but it sounded like she was disappointed in a way.

“This is one of those Muggle Motorcars,” Luna said looking at the large, dark green vehicle.

“Called a Land Rover,” Harry said. “The Queen loves them, I’ve heard.”

“And why this?”

“Only way to get where we’re going,” Harry said. “Keeps the poachers out, it does. So I’ve been told, anyway. Can’t get into the Reserve with any known magic. And your car is tracked once you’re in.”

“I guess that makes sense in a way,” Luna said without really understanding. “So what do I do?”

Harry opened the passenger side door. “Have a seat.”

Luna climbed in and took her seat and Harry strapped her in.

“What’s this for?” she asked about the seatbelt.

“Safety,” Harry said. “In the unlikely even I should wreck this thing, it should keep you safe.”

“Oh. And will you strap in too?”

Harry nodded. He then walked around and took his seat on the driver’s side. “No worries, Luna. I have no intention of driving this like I fly my broom.” Harry strapped in as well before starting the engine.

“Okay, I guess,” Luna replied.

They drove slowly down the drive around the huge lawn Harry now called “The Pitch” for it was about the size of a Quidditch pitch. The Manor House was at one end and when he reached the middle he stopped.

“Are we there already?” Luna asked. “Why did we need a motorcar?”

Harry chuckled. “No Luna, we’re not there yet.”

“Then why’d you stop? Are you supposed to or something?”

“No Luna. I just want to show you something.”

“What?”

Harry pointed to the south. “On Monday, building will begin just the other side of this lawn. On both sides, actually.”

“Building?”

Harry nodded. “To the South will be Longbottom House. It’ll be a Manor for Neville and his family as they are technically in exile right now. To the north will be Black House...”

“Where your Black women will live?”

“Not necessarily. Some will, for certain. But it won’t be just Blacks,” Harry said placing the Land Rover in gear and driving off.

“I heard you’re going to get more women. How many? Why?”

“Ideally I’ll have a Consort for each House,” Harry said. “Of course, finding my Lady Black ... well, it’s not like I can truly ask. I guess I could, but the rites require her to make the offer or... Anyway, there are a lot of young witches we know who are to be sold this summer. Hermione asked me to buy them all. Well, that was the plan at first, but there are now more of our friends for sale so we are probably going to ask Neville to help. Anyway, Hermione wants ten witches in each of my two lines. As big as my Manor is, it is small if you consider there will be twenty families living there.”

“And what does Hermione think of this?”

“She is not thrilled with the notion,” Harry said. “But I really did not have much of a choice with Dora, Minerva and Mallory. And she insisted that I take in Daphne and Astoria. She hates the whole notion of concubines but knows that we can’t change that yet, so she wants me to help our friends. She would rather they be my concubines than the fate that would otherwise await them. So, I’ve agreed to buy at least twelve more. Problem is that there are more than twelve up for sale and Hermione doesn’t want anything bad to happen to any of the others. So...”

“You’ll buy them too?”

“Every first time concubine set for sale,” Harry nodded. “Although I really don’t want that many. Don’t really want twenty, but that’s what Hermione says I should have.”

“And the others?”

“We’re going to talk to Neville about taking them.”

“Do you think he will?”

“Hope so,” Harry shrugged as he drove straight through the intersection and headed east towards the center of the island.

“And what do you think about all of this?” Luna asked.

“I really don’t know what to think, Luna,” Harry admitted. “All I wanted in life was a family. All I wanted for a wife was Hermione. Took me a while to figure that one out. It took ... it took seeing her there and nobody knowing if she’d ever get better. But I knew then and knew I would be hers if she’d have me. I was afraid that maybe she didn’t feel for me the way I feel for her...”

“But she does.”

Harry nodded. “You have no idea how happy I was to find that out.”

Luna could only nod as she saw them pass through a gate.

“What’s that?” she asked.

“The entry to the West Farm,” Harry said. “At least that’s what I think it was. Haven’t left it since I’ve been here. Then again, it hasn’t even been two weeks yet.”

“Are you okay Harry?”

“This all has been so weird, Luna. Two weeks ago, I was still at Hogwarts had had a girlfriend - Hermione - and while I had already asked her to marry me, I meant like in a few years or so. Then she and I had ... well ... and it turned out we completed the Consort Bond and were married. We were here in a place I never knew about and all that. I then found out that I had inherited women! Bloody hell, I barely had a girlfriend and now I’m married and have other women as well? Then I find out the Death Eaters are demanding that Mr. Greengrass sells his daughters to Lord Black. Well, I was Lord Black, so I had to at least find out what all that was and next thing I know I have six women! Then there’s Hermione insisting I take even more. Then there’s finding out about this place and that I’m a Duke. It’s been - weird.”

Luna nodded. “Are you happy?”



“Scared more like,” Harry admitted. “I mean, I now have a wife and five other wives of sorts and ... I’m not even sixteen, Luna! How can I make them happy? Are they happy? Can they be?”

Luna laughed. “Harry, the fact that you are worried about that means that you probably can. As you said, your not yet sixteen. Not that I would know, but most boys would probably be more concerned about getting all the sex they could. And you’re concerned about their happiness? You’ll do just fine.”

“But are they happy? Can they be with that bond thing?”

“Are you asking about Hermione or the others?”

“All of them.”

“Well, as to Hermione, she can tell you how she feels. Does she seem unhappy?”

“I would think she should,” Harry said. “Never saw her as one who would want to share her husband.”

“She is a very selfless person, Harry. I know you know that. So long as she’s first in your heart and your other women are also bound to you, I’m sure she’ll be okay.”

“And the others?”

“They are happy as well.”

“How can you tell?”

“They told me so,” Luna said. “Maybe they thought I wasn’t listening or maybe they thought I was, but they all spent time with me the past couple of days and they all talked about you and your unique new family. Their bond might keep them from telling you how they truly feel - although I don’t think that’s the case any longer - and even then,

it would only prevents them from being honest with you if it would hurt you. But, they can be honest with each other and with someone like me.”

“You?”

“They know that I know what they are and who they are bound to. They also know that I’d never say anything to hurt you. So they felt free to talk to me. And I can tell you this, Harry, they do love you. All of them. True, each for their own reasons as they are each very different people, but I’d bet if you could free them from the Concubine Bond, they would still want to be with you and be the same people for you as they are right now.”

“Still...”

“Harry, the truth is they are all probably better off bound to you than they would have been otherwise and it’s not just because you can afford to take care of them. If you must know, there is a glut of witches in Magical Britain and there has been for a long time.”

“A glut? You mean too many?”

“I mean more witches than wizards,” Luna said. “There are more than two witches for every wizard.”

“But it’s roughly even at school,” Harry said.

“Because many young witches are home schooled,” Luna said. “Many of the ones who are schooled at home are already betrothed to a wizard. Those of us who are not enter the schools. Most of the girls you see in school, and certainly most all the Muggle Borns, are destined to be bound to a Wizard as either a Consort or Concubine. There are exceptions, but they are just that, exceptions and not the rule.”

“So...”

“So, in all likelihood, girls like Hermione and the others would have become Concubines even if you were never around. They have far more of a life before them here bound to you than they could realistically expect in Britain. Here, they can pursue their dreams, have children and feel loved by their man. In Britain, they would most likely be the property of their Wizard unless they were lucky enough to become a Consort.”

“Technically, they still are,” Harry began.

“But in all other respects, they are not Harry. You don’t treat them as property. You treat them as people. Yes, they are much better off bound to you than otherwise might be the case. In that regard, any witch bound to you should consider herself very lucky indeed.”

“Mallory is already pregnant, you know.”

“Really? Congratulations.”

“And all but Astoria are trying. And Astoria will try when she’s a little older.”

“And you’re worried?”

“Don’t know what kind of Dad I’ll be,” Harry sighed.

“No one does until they are, Harry,” Luna said. “And you can bet that each of your women are wondering what kind of Mum’s they’ll be as well. It’s natural.”

“I think they’ll all be wonderful.”

“Then you have little to worry about.”

“And what do you want, Luna? What do you hope for?”

“Well, aside from seeing a Crumple Horned Snorkack today, I need to think about things. Daddy should not have... anyway, since he’s gone, I need to think about things, okay?”

Harry nodded and continued to drive down the lonely road. They soon passed beneath a sign that proclaimed they were entering the Charenwell Wildlife Reserve. Almost immediately, they were driving through thick forest and the road seemed to wind and climb upwards into the mountains. After about half an hour, they reached a car park and what was said to be a trail head and Harry stopped. They got out, picked up their packs which had their lunch and beverages and other things and the two of them headed up the trail.

After a couple of miles or so walking through the woods, the trail came upon a large meadow. In the meadow were several creatures the likes of which Harry had never even seen a picture of before. He heard Luna gasp and noticed she had stopped. Harry turned to her and saw she had her camera out and was taking some pictures of the meadow and the creatures that seemed to be grazing before them. She stopped and looked at Harry with an odd expression.

“Thank you, Harry,” she said in a soft voice that seemed filled with awe.

Harry looked a little confused.

“Don’t you see them too?” she asked.

Harry nodded. “What are they?”

“Crumple Horned Snorkacks, silly,” Luna said with a smile.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
3. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
4. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
5. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN: THE BLACK LINE

FRIDAY, JULY 5, 1996 - Potter Manor

It was supposed to be a quiet day at the Manor. But as Harry and Hermione were too distracted by the condition of their friend Luna, Remus and Dora decided to give them a break. Harry was in his study going over yet more books of account so as to familiarize himself with his holdings. He was planning on getting to the Rules of Wizengamot Procedure later, although he was not too worried about that. As a Parliamentarian, he was allowed and assistant of his choosing, and Hermione probably had the Rules memorized by now. She was off in the Library reading.

A knock on the door relieved Harry of the grind of pouring over yet another indecipherable stock portfolio. While he liked the Manor and the Estate, this part of being the richest Wizard in Britain was a pain. At least he did not have to manage this.

"Come in," he said. The door opened and Mallory entered the room.

"Harry," she said, "your guest is awake and just finished eating a light meal. She wishes to speak with you and your Lady."

"Now?"

"If it is convenient, Harry."

"It is," he said with relief. No more books of account for now. Luna walked in dressed in borrowed pajamas with Hermione right behind her.

"Ms. Lovegood has something to say to you both," Mallory said. "By your leave," she added and left the room.

"I don't know if Hermione ever told you this, Harry," Luna said, "but I was born with a form of Second Sight."

"You're a Seer?"

“Not exactly. Seers can see the future with some clarity, I can only see trends in the future.”

“Okay, what’s that mean.”

“I can look at a person and if I concentrate hard enough, I can see where their life is headed in a general sense. I see colors in my mind that I’ve learned from observation have meaning. Black is one end and it is associated with misery, despair, sadness, death; basically a bad life. White is at the other end and means hope, joy, happiness, family love and so on. Most people are grays, somewhere in between.

“For as long as I’ve known you and Hermione, you both have been far more black than gray or white.”

“And what does that mean?” Harry asked.

“It means that unless something changed in your lives, your path led to sadness and despair. For months and months, I tried in my mind to examine variables - change something about your lives - that would push you towards the white without success. It’s not easy, because the true change might not be obvious at all. I thought of you and Hermione together and, while it was better, it was not much better. I thought of you and Hermione forever apart, and that was a disaster waiting to happen. But, while it was obvious the best thing for you two was for you to become more than friends, it was only marginally better than no change at all. Then your godfather died, Harry.”

“Why does that matter? I mean, that makes things worse, right?”

“Actually, there was a major shift towards the white with just his death. I don’t know why, but there was. I noticed it the day after it happened and again started inputting variables that had not happened to see the effect. You’re marrying Hermione sooner rather than later had another significant shift, but it still was not enough. I then thought of something I never would have considered, could two wives be better than one?

“The answer was, it depended upon who that wife was and when you married her, Harry. And it has to be a wife for the best results, although taking that woman who is most beneficial to you as a Concubine does help.”

“Who did you consider?” Hermione asked.

“Wait,” Harry said, “you believe this?”

“There are documented cases and Luna has told me enough about her abilities to convince me that when she talks of her ‘seeing’ I should pay attention.”

“Thank you, Hermione. Now, there are certainly some girls you know you should stay away from unless you already have your second Consort. Ginny Weasley would be the worst thing for you. Although, if she is taken as a Concubine after you have two Consorts, she is a non-factor.”

“And before?”

“Her existence in your life would cancel out many of the gains,” Luna said. “I don’t know why.”

“Who’s the best choice?”

“Oddly enough, Harry. Me. Again, I don’t know why and I don’t know how. How can you have two Consorts?” Luna knew the answer but did not want to let on that she knew. She had to let Harry tell her and offer her the chance to become Lady Black. He had to tell her she could. For some reason, this was important.

Harry decided not to say anything for the moment.

“But if it were possible, somehow the combination of Hermione and me as your Consorts and wives shifts all of us almost all the way into the white, for now. Eliminate Voldemort as a factor and the life ahead is white and not gray or black. But, this can’t happen, can it?”



“Still, having my self bound to you in anyway is beneficial, Harry. True, being your Concubine is not as beneficial as being your Consort, but it is still a good thing for all of us.

“I’m an orphan,” Luna announced. “You know, Harry. My Mum died years ago and my Daddy just the other day. I have no one.”

“Luna,” Harry began. She waved him off.

“I know my fate, Harry,” she said. “Unless I become a Consort in the next few days, I can be sold as a concubine.” Luna’s shoulders slumped.

Harry nodded. He knew this was true.

“And Hermione is already your Consort,” Luna added with sadness in her voice. “Can you buy me?”

Harry looked at Hermione. She nodded to him and he understood.

“Actually, Luna, I can have two Consorts,” Harry said. Luna looked at him in feigned disbelief. She already knew that, but could not hope for Harry to want her that way. “When Sirius died, he made it so I would be emancipated. That allowed me to come into my inheritance and become Lord Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter as well as to legally bind myself to Hermione as my Lady Potter. But Sirius was also the last Lord Black, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black and he had no heir. He named me his heir in his will so...”

“You’re the head of two Ancient and Noble Houses?” Luna asked again in feigned disbelief.

Harry nodded.

“So you can have more than one Consort?”

Harry nodded again.

“Harry I ... I want to ask you to make me your Lady Black, but...”

“But?”

“It’s not that I don’t love you. I do. I’m just afraid.”

“Of what?”

“Of the sex rite. I’ve never even kissed a boy before much less done any of that and...”

“Makes you nervous?”

Luna nodded. “A part of me wants to Harry, honestly it does. But...”

“If there was a way to make you less nervous, would you ask?”

Luna nodded.

“What are you thinking, Harry?” Hermione asked.

“Daphne and Astoria,” Harry said.

“You want them here? Harry they’re out shopping today.”

“No, that’s not what I meant. I meant something similar to what we did to help them through their bonding rite.”

“Oh!” Hermione said as if she was getting an idea. “Actually, Luna and I were talking earlier today about this and I thought that would work as well,” Hermione said. “Okay Harry, drop your drawers and show Luna your man bits.”

“What?” Harry asked in confusion.

“Please?” Hermione begged.

“Why?”

“We can show Luna what’s going to happen.”

Harry did as he was told. As he had no warning that there might be sex involved in this “talk,” it was the sleeping Little Harry that made its debut to the blonde.

“It’s kind of cute,” Luna said. “And it’s all hairy down there.”

“Sit next to her, Harry,” Hermione said. Harry did. “Okay, Luna, gently play with his bits and watch what happens.”

Luna leaned against Harry and her right hand found him. She began gently kneading his balls and cock and the reaction was almost immediate. “Hermione,” she gasped, “it’s, it’s growing?”

“It does that when it begins to want to play,” Hermione giggled.

“What’s going on?” Harry asked.

“Luna knows that to become your Consort she has to do certain things to you and with you,” Hermione said. “Her Mum and Dad never talked to her about boys and she’s never seen or read about them either. She was afraid she might change her mind if she was - er - confronted with reality. So I suggested we ease into it.”

“Wow!” Luna said. “It really did get big! And hard too!” She was now gently stroking Harry’s shaft. “Now I see what you mean, Hermione. I wondered how he was going to put it in me when I first saw it.”

“You like it?” Harry asked.

Luna nodded. “You’ll go in much farther than my fingers can. You’ll be able to explore my cave and find places I never found! Although...”

“Although?”

“It’s a lot bigger than my fingers too.”

Hermione told Luna to wrap her fingers around Harry and use her hand to gently pump her new toy up and down. She explained that this was how boys played with themselves and if Luna did it long enough, Harry would orgasm. Luna seemed to be thrilled at the prospect although looked a little concerned when Hermione whispered not to tell Luna when he was going to come. “Let it be a surprise,” she said.

“So,” Luna asked, “do you do this to yourself, Harry?”

“Erm,” Harry replied with difficulty as Luna was doing a pretty good job, “not recently. N-no n-need. Hermione.”

“Does she do this to you?”

“Erm - no. N-never has. N-not really.”

“He prefers being in my mouth or pussy,” Hermione said. “I’ve wanted to, but he just wants to play with me too.”

“Does he pet your pussy?” Luna asked.

“From time to time. But ... well you’ll find out. Since I never really did this to him, I thought it be fun if you had a first with him.”

“Thanks. This is fun!”

“F-faster,” Harry begged. Harry saw Hermione nod at Luna and Luna picked up the pace earning a moan of pleasure from Harry.

“Do you like this?” Luna asked. Harry nodded. “Do you do this to yourself a lot?” Harry shrugged. “I like to pet my pussy a lot. I try for at least three orgasms a day. Hermione did tell you we play with ourselves together?”

Harry nodded. He could feel the end coming quickly.

“It’s really fun with her there,” Luna said. “She makes the cutest faces when she’s petting herself. So it seems do you.”

Harry grunted as his climax hit and could feel himself erupt.

“Oh my,” Luna gasped! “Look Hermione! It gave me a pressie! What just happened?”

“Harry came.”

“Really?”

Hermione nodded.

“And this stuff?”

“That’s what happens when boys finish. You should taste it, Luna.”

“Why? I mean not that I don’t want to try, but...”

“Cause to become a Consort, he’s going to have to give you a pressie in your mouth. You should - er - know what it’s like.”

“Makes sense,” Luna said. Harry watched in mild shock as Luna liked all his seed from her hand and then began licking it off him as well. She did not seemed phased at all.

Hermione stood up and began undressing. “Help Harry get out of those things, will you Luna?”

Luna eagerly did as she was asked, removing Harry’s shoes, socks and the trousers that were down around his ankles as Harry removed his shirt.

“Do you want me to get naked too?” Luna asked.

“Not yet,” Hermione said, now standing before them naked. “Harry and I are going to show you what you’re going to do later.”

Hermione straddled Harry and began kissing him passionately, moaning as his hands explored her and began working her breasts. She spent a few minutes alternating between kissing him and letting him suckle her before sliding off his lap and kneeling between his legs. Harry was ready again and Hermione took him into her mouth. Luna was now lying on her stomach with her chin perched on her hands, her face only inches away from Hermione’s bobbing head watching the action intently. It only took Harry a couple of minutes to climax and as soon as he stopped, Hermione released him, turned to Luna and opened her mouth to show Luna another Harry pressie before resuming her work on his cock. About a minute later, Hermione stopped and let “Little Harry” go.

“How long do you do that?” Luna asked.

“Until he either asks you to stop or there’s nothing left of him to play with.”

“Oh.”

Hermione and Harry changed places. Hermione spread her legs and Harry immediately began licking her sex with Luna again mere inches from his head. Hermione soon rewarded Harry for his endeavors with moans of pleasure as he worked at her and she thrust herself into his face. His tongue soon entered her and filled her which had the intended results within a minute.

“I’m coming,” Hermione moaned. When Harry finally stopped after Hermione went limp, he knelt up, his monster having returned. Harry noted that Luna had shifted and was kneeling on the couch facing them with her legs open.

“Are you going to have sex with her now?” Luna asked.

Harry nodded.

“Do you mind if I play with myself while you do? I’m all wet, hot and bothered.”

“Be my guest,” Harry said and watched as Luna’s hand immediately dove into her pajama bottoms. Moments after she started on herself, Harry buried his monster into Hermione.

The room soon filled with the low moans of two women. Harry noticed that Luna’s eyes were open watching him make love to Hermione as her pajama bottoms bulged and bounced as she pleased herself. Hermione, when her eyes were opened, alternated between watching Harry and watching Luna. Harry then remembered what Hermione had told him their first day together as lovers. She had fantasized about having sex with both Luna and him. Part of him wondered if yet another of her sexual fantasies would become a reality today. The thought of that drove Harry wild.

Minutes later, Luna leaned towards Harry, her hand working and what seemed a furious pace between her legs while her other one was now up her pajama top. Harry looked at her and saw her half-opened eyes staring back. She then whispered loudly. “I’m coming, Harry!”

“Me too,” Hermione all but screamed.

This was too much for Harry. He was a close third.

Luna wanted to bond with him right then and there. Hermione put her foot down and insisted that they all had lunch. Luna admitted she could use a bite and then was told that bondings in this House happened somewhere else anyway.

They had lunch on the Veranda. Luna was a little embarrassed being outside in nothing but her pajamas until Hermione told her that she and some of the others spent time out here wearing considerably less as in nothing at all. Luna learned that they were the only ones at the Manor today. The Longbottoms and Greengrass sisters were all in Pottersport. Astoria and Daphne were spending the day with Harry’s sister Clarice and the Longbottoms were seeing the sites and

shopping. Alice and Frank were being taken to the local Wandmaker for new wands. Minerva was up at Hogwarts finishing some work before her retirement became effective. Mallory was at the hospital in Pottersport. Dora was in Surrey pretending to keep an eye on Harry at his relatives place. Fortunately, they only had a couple more days before they could dispense with this ruse.

During lunch, Luna explained why she thought their lives had shifted towards happiness. She explained first of all that this was merely a hypothesis as her gift defied such clarity. Still, explaining that the events following the death of Sirius Black had changed Harry's life and the lives of many others was hard. Luna told them she believed that the reason Sirius's death was an important milestone was because it had allowed Harry to attain his majority and all his titles including Lord Black. Moreover, Luna was certain had Sirius lived, Harry might not have bonded with Hermione when he did. That act, and the bonds that followed gave Harry something to live for and a clear sense of a life after Voldemort. Would Harry continue to take risks? In time, probably. But he would not accept death as his destiny, only a risk he shared with many others. This would allow Harry to find a way to win without having to die and that was why all the associated lives had shifted so markedly towards a happy future even now.

When their lunch ended, Harry and Hermione led Luna to the Library. Luna was as impressed as the others had been.

"Why are we here?" she asked when she had finished taking it in.

"This is where all the bondings have occurred," Hermione said. She pointed to the long reading bench. "Harry and I lost our virginity right there. We also bonded there. And there was where Harry bonded with Dora, Mallory, Minerva, Daphne and Astoria."

"I see," Luna said remembering something in the book about Bonding Places and that this magnified the magic somehow. "And so this is where Harry and I will bond?"

Hermione nodded.



Luna smiled and then walked into Harry's arms. She hugged him for a long while and enjoyed feeling his arms around her. Eventually she looked up at him and leaned forward seeking her first real kiss. He kissed her back, gently at first. Luna soon opened her mouth inviting more passion and Harry responded. Luna so enjoyed his tongue playing with hers. She felt her passion and love for Harry growing to never before heights. She never wanted the kiss to end, but knew it had to. She broke it after several minutes.

She backed away from Harry a couple of steps and pulled down her pajama bottoms, stepping out of them. Her top was long and hid any view of her for the moment. Luna smiled at Harry as she slowly unbuttoned her pajama top starting at the neck and working down. She allowed the upper part to fall open, but not enough to expose her breasts. She knew she was teasing Harry and could see from the bulge growing in his pants it was working. It was working for her too as she could feel the heat and moisture building between her legs.

Harry watched as Luna undid the last button and casually let her top fall from her shoulders. Her breasts were noticeable smaller than Hermione's, maybe about the size of Minerva's, he thought. Luna's hard nipples, though, were huge. His eyes worked down her body. Her skin was pale white, yet pleasant and Harry soon noticed that she was bare between the legs. This was a bit of a surprise, although Hermione had said there were other girls who kept themselves bare.

"You're beautiful," he said and a large smile formed on her face as she stepped towards him and into a deep kiss. His hands explored her body and his efforts were rewarded as she moaned softly into his mouth. His hands found her breasts and large nipples and she seemed to melt into his arms as he caressed them. He could feel her small hands unbuttoning his shirt, unbuckling his belt, opening his trousers and gently helping them fall to his feet followed slowly by his boxers. As he stepped out of his pants and allowed his shirt to fall away, he felt her hand find him and being softly and slowly stroking him. The kiss finally broke, but her hand remained where it had been. She finally spoke.

“I love you, Harry.”

“I love you too,” he replied.

“I, Luna Celeste Lovegood, of my own volition and free will, and from my undying love for thee, offer you, Lord Harry James Potter-Black Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, myself. I offer you all I have or will have, all I was, am and will ever be in mind, body, heart soul and magic, as friend to friend, lover to lover, wife to husband as your consort, as your partner and companion, your’s and your’s alone and your’s in all things, to fulfill your desires, to stand by your side, to follow you, to bear your children, from this day forward until death shall separate me from you, your House and heirs. Do you accept me, as yours forever, My Love?”

“I accept you as my Lady Luna Black forever,” he replied.

She gave him a soft kiss and then smiled before she sank down on her knees and took him into her mouth for the first time. She was slow and deliberate and wonderful, Harry thought. As she pleased him, Harry watched as Hermione undressed before him as well.

Sometime later, Luna sat cuddled in his lap with Hermione cuddled into his open side. Luna’s legs rested on Hermione’s lap. Harry had just finished the bonding rites having orally pleased Luna and then making love to her for her first time that had her screaming with ecstasy twice before he finally finished. He had made love to Hermione as well, before he again made love to Luna, or rather she had made love to him as she had straddled him begging him to suck her “boobies” while she rode her wonderful “new toy.” Harry was definitely coming to appreciate the joys of willing and eager witches. He was certain she had finally come down from her high when she slid off his lap and was now seated between him and Hermione.

“Luna?” Harry asked.

“Hmmmm?” she sighed.

“Um - well - you don’t have any hair...” it was a question he had been dying to ask from the moment he first saw her naked.

“Oh that. I didn’t like hair there so Hermione got rid of it sometime ago.”

“Hermione?”

Luna nodded. “Has Hermione told you what goes on in the girls loos and bathrooms at school?” Luna asked.

Harry nodded.

“It really turns him on,” Hermione giggled.

“Which stuff?” Luna asked. “The girl sex or girls playing with themselves all over the place?”

“Both,” Harry admitted with a slight blush.

Luna looked at him intently for a moment and then shrugged. “Anyway, I didn’t know about any of that before I came to school. I didn’t even know you could do that. I’m sure my Mum would have told me had she lived, but she didn’t and I’m sure Daddy never knew.

“So, as you can imagine, my first days at school were an education. It seems girls were getting off all over the place. There was plenty of girl sex, but I’d say the majority of girls were not into that and just played with themselves. I didn’t know why nor did I ask. It seemed all the older girls were doing it and I know a couple of my roommates rubbed themselves off our first night, although I had no idea what the moaning was about at the time.

“Since everyone was doing it in one way or another and they all seemed to enjoy it whether by themselves or with others, I figured why not? A couple of weeks after I started school, I rubbed myself off for the first time. I was in my room listening to the other girls play with themselves and just started doing it. I knew how by then as most the

older girls are hardly shy about doing it when other girls were watching. So I did it and - wow - I knew why they liked it so much.

“It wasn’t until after Christmas that I worked up the courage to try the Pussy Petting Benches...”

“The what?” Harry asked.

“The benches in the girls loo where we sit and play with ourselves,” Hermione said.

“Oh.”

“I had noticed,” Luna continued, “that even girls who were not girl sex girls frequently had a friend or friends with them on the bench and they all did it at the same time together, mostly naked if they had enough time. Maybe that was a way to make a friend. But it didn’t happen for me. No one wanted to sit with me and rub themselves off.

“Of course I was a little disappointed, but I liked my orgasms and used the Pussy Petting Benches almost every day.

“Third Year came and Professor Burbage told the Ravenclaw witches in my year about the importance of having orgasms as teens. Well, three of us were already rubbing ourselves off regularly. The other two became girl sex girls. I wasn’t opposed to the idea, mind you. It looked like fun. But, I really didn’t want to do it with any of the girls in my House. They weren’t nice to me. No one else asked so...” Luna shrugged.

“It was the day after your name came out of the Goblet of Fire when Hermione and I started becoming friends. I had noticed before that she often was alone on the Pussy Petting Benches as well. Anyway, I was on the Bench getting ready to start...”

“Getting ready?” Harry asked.

“I had already pulled my skirt and knickers down and unbuttoned my blouse so I could bare my boobies for a little self foreplay - as in play with them to get me hot and wet and ready. Most girls did that, unless there was a time issue. If there was, you just stuck your hand down there, found yourself and began right away. The longer and almost naked way is more fun. Anyway, I was getting ready to start when Hermione sat down next to me. It was pretty crowded in there at the time and it was probably the only place left. She looked upset so I asked her what was wrong.

“ She was upset because everyone thought you had cheated somehow to get in that silly tournament and she knew you did not. I told her I believed you and not the others. That got us talking and she started to feel better. We then pleasured ourselves together and we both enjoyed it so much. We compared our class schedules and she worked out a schedule for us to meet again for Pussy Petting the next day. We did. We talked and played with our pussies and had wonderful orgasms together. We worked out a schedule so we could pussy pet together every day. It's amazing how open you become doing that in front of the same witch day in and day out and her doing that in front of you.

“Of course, we could not help but see each other's pussies when we did that and I noted she was hairless down there. I asked her about it and she told me she didn't like the hair, so she got rid of it. She learned a spell that made it go away and not come back. Well, I liked the way her pussy looked and asked her to do the spell on me and she did. I must admit, I think it's much better this way. Plus, now she can see me better as well.

“This past year, we got even more open about petting our pussies together. When we sat on the bench, we both made sure the other had a clear view of our pussies when we did it. And our boobies too. When we had the time, we would strip for each other really close so we could each see each other's bits and stuff. I really liked it and I really enjoyed the fact that Hermione talked to me too. Still.

“I never told Hermione this, but I wanted girl sex with her. I probably have since our first pussy petting session. As I said, I was not

opposed to the idea. I just wanted to do it with a friend and now I had one. But she was in a different House, which makes the logistics difficult and she never let on she might be interested so I was content with the Pussy Petting Bench and being able to watch my friend bring herself off every day."

Harry glanced over at Hermione. She had a look of joy on her face. Harry had an idea why but...

"You want to see?" Luna asked.

"What?" Harry replied.

"What we usually did on the Pussy Petting Benches, silly."

"Erm..."

"Oh come on, Harry! I know you do. Your cock is begging for it," she added looking at Harry who was once again full aroused.

"S-sure?"

"We'll assume this is a long session," Luna said. "Long sessions were where we had time to get naked for each other, like we are now, get our orgasms together, get dressed again and to class or meals. Most other girls did too if they had Petting Partners. Once we were both naked, we'd each begin playing with our boobs as we got ready to get going."

Harry's jaw dropped as the two girls began doing just that, playing with their own boobs.

"I like watching Hermione do that," Luna continued. "She's got such a nice, big pair. Much bigger than me."

"Ah," Hermione added with a purr in her voice, "but when you're aroused, you have such wonderfully huge nipples, Luna."

“Can’t have the boobs, nipples are not so bad,” Luna said. “They are fun! Anyway, we’d sit together on the bench, get as close as we could,” she said and she and Hermione were now side by side with no room between them, “and put an arm around the other’s shoulders,” and they did. “We were perfect in a way. Hermione likes to do herself with her right hand and I prefer my left, so there you go. We’d sit here like this for a bit playing with our breasts before we each went for our own pleasure place.”

Harry watched with wide eyes and an increasingly painful erection. He watched as the two witches slowly removed their hands from their own breasts and moved down their bodies, as their legs spread apart for access, as they watched each other begin to touch themselves.

“H-Harry?” Hermione asked as she began rubbing her own clit. “Remember my fantasy?”

“W-which one?”

“I make myself come while you watch and do the same to yourself?”

“Um... yeah.”

“Come on, Love. Stand in close to us and do it!”

“Erm...”

“Oh, that sounds like fun,” Luna added. “As close as you can get without getting in our way!”

Harry stood up and faced the two girls who were clearly playing with themselves yet arm in arm and very close. And this isn’t girl sex, he thought? He moved towards them, one leg either side of their two which were side by side and pressed against one another. He got as close as he could to them, closer than he had thought has they had moved forward on the couch together.

“Go on, Harry, rub one off for us,” Hermione purred.

His fully erect self was inches from them. "But..."

"I know it's close, but you can leave your boy pressie on my face if you want," Luna said.

"Mine too," Hermione added.

"Both of ours," they said in unison. Harry could not believe this, but decided to go with it, gripping his member and beginning to stroke himself. He watched the two girls as they both were now pushing fingers into their own sex while alternating between watching him and watching each other. He soon noticed Hermione's arm around Luna's shoulder shift as she turned ever so slightly towards the blonde. She seemed to pull Luna a little closer and her hand on Luna's shoulder slid down and found Luna's breast. Luna eyes closed and she moaned as Hermione began playing with the large, erect nipple.

"Hermione," Luna gasped, "you never did that on the Benches!"

Hermione looked into Luna's eyes. "Wanted to," she panted. "Always wanted to." She then leaned forward and kissed Luna on the lips. It was short and tender, but it was enough for the younger blonde. She adjusted herself so she could play with Hermione's larger breast as well. "I - I always h-hoped," she began before kissing Hermione back, this time with far more passion, to which Hermione responded in kind and moaned into Luna's kiss. The two girls broke only for short gasps as their pleasure built. Lips opened, tongues entered and tangled, moans of pleasure increased and Harry could no longer control himself.

Harry lost it and watched as he spurted his seed onto his two witches. It hit their chins, cheeks and one spurt hit their point of lip contact. He was stunned when the two, still pumping themselves, broke their kiss and began licking each other clean. Once each of them had given an adequate tongue bath to the other to remove his release from their faces, he watched in awe as Hermione leaned over and drew one of Luna's huge and erect nipples into her mouth.

"W-we d-definitely n-never d-d-did this," Luna panted. "Oh my!"



As Hermione continued to suckle the younger witch, Harry heard a loud moan from her. He could tell from Hermione's body language she had reached a powerful orgasm. As she came down, Harry watched as she pulled her fingers from her sex. Her sex soaked hand moved up as if she was offering it to Luna. Luna accepted and began to suck Hermione's juices from the fingers of her partner. Luna then moaned as well, shuddering as her own climax overwhelmed her. Hermione let go of Luna's teat and was soon sucking on Luna's sex soaked fingers as well. The two girls were engrossed in each other for a few more minutes before either of them could think, much less speak.

"Hermione," Luna whispered. "Do you want girl sex with me?"

Hermione could only nod and smile at Luna with a goofy smile.

The two witches began kissing each other with desire, caressing each other's boobs and clearly getting each other aroused. After a few minutes, Luna lay back on the couch. Hermione got up and repositioned herself. She knelt over Luna's face and lowered herself, giving Luna access to her sex. As Luna started lapping Hermione, Hermione gave a sultry moan of pleasure before leaning forward to start her own fun with Luna's pussy. As Hermione's tongue began its ministrations, Luna's muffled moan filled the room. Now this definitely was girl sex, Harry thought watching as the two young witches shuddered, writhed, gasped and moaned as they pleased each other. Minutes later, a loud squeal from Hermione caught Harry's attention. Moments after another Hermione moan, he saw her raising her hips from Luna's now very wet face. Seconds later, Luna moaned that she was coming too. Soon, the two very sated girls were embraced in a cuddle, each with goofy grins on their face. Unfortunately, Harry needed some help.

Luna looked over and saw that Harry had returned to his full glory. "Oh Dear," she said. "One horny Harry and there's two of us?"

"Bit of a problem," Hermione agreed. "As it's one horny Harry and two horny witches. One of us might get left out."

“I know,” Luna said, “you ride his wand and I’ll ride his face, that way nobody’s left out!”

“Only if you promise that you’ll kiss me senseless, suck my boobs and play with my pussy while I do,” Hermione said. “And I’ll do the same to you.”

“This is going to be so much fun,” Luna said as Hermione began mounting Harry. As Luna settled onto Harry’s face she added, “you two have such interesting games to play here!”

SATURDAY, JULY 6, 1996. Potter Manor.

The bonding rite for the new consort with the concubines was simple and strait forward. All Harry had to do was have sex with Luna and then Hermione while the others watched and it would be complete. The order did not matter at all. But Hermione and Luna had other ideas and wanted to use this as a way to announce that girl sex and three ways were now authorized.

The five concubines assembled in the Library dressed in what they now called their “Fuck Me” robes. Hermione and Luna entered and took a seat on the “Bonding Bench” facing them.

“As you all know,” Hermione said, “yesterday Luna asked to become the Lord Black Consort and Harry consented. I filled the role as the House Potter Bonding shag so Luna is now fully bound to Harry, House Potter, House Black and me. Today we complete the rite to bind you to her and her to you. And yes, Harry does want to shag us all silly before we’re done this morning.”

“Oh goodie!” Astoria said.

“He has been neglecting us these past few days,” Daphne nodded.

“Harry has some matters to attend to, so Luna and I decided we’ll get started without him,” Hermione said with a grin.

The other witches looked at each other in confusion. When they looked back, the blonde and brunette were standing naked in front of them, kissing each other deeply and caressing each other's breasts. This rapidly escalated into the two women sucking each other and teasing each other with their fingers. Soon the foreplay stopped. Hermione lay on the bench and Luna lowered herself on top of her so each could access each other's sex and fuck each other's faces. It did not take them long to bring each other to loud orgasms.

"I guess that means girl sex is on the menu?" Daphne giggled.

"I guess," Astoria agreed.

Luna was soon lying on the bench with Hermione on top of her snogging the younger blonde silly. It was then that Harry appeared. None of the other witches knew about his invisibility cloak until that moment when he revealed both himself and the cloak. He absently tossed the cloak aside, and for a moment stood there both very naked and very aroused watching his two Consorts kiss each other before finally joining in himself. Hermione and Harry kissed the breath out of the blonde before they both began working their way down Luna's body, kissing and suckling her as they went. Finally, they reached her sex and for a few moments it looked like they would take turns or try to eat her together. But Harry soon got up leaving Luna to Hermione. Hermione's hips were in the air as Harry positioned himself between her legs and behind her and drove himself into her Chamber. As he trusted, Hermione took the building pleasure out on Luna and they soon achieved a simultaneous, three-way orgasm.

It was not long before the scene changed again for the five witches. Hermione and Luna changed places and after Harry and Luna finished driving Hermione insane with their foreplay, Luna buried her face between Hermione's legs and Harry buries himself into the blonde.

Hermione was running her fingers through Luna's long blonde hair as Luna lapped at her pussy and clit. As Harry continued thrusting into Luna he watched as Hermione was now bucking her hips against the eager blonde's face. Both young women were moaning with

increasing pleasure and Harry had to admit, having sex like this was a real turn on and doing it in front of the others was an even bigger turn on.

“I - I I’m coming!” Hermione soon moaned loudly.

“Me too!” Luna added moments later. This was all it took for Harry as he unloaded into Luna thus completing their second three way orgasms.

Some minutes later as the three had finished their three way cuddle and kisses, Luna and Hermione untangled themselves from Harry and each other and the three sat on the couch opposite the other witches, Harry in the middle, Hermione to his left and Luna to his right.

“That was fun,” Luna said. “I do like those games! Girl sex is even better than I thought and if any of you want to give me a go, I’m willing and conveniently naked and horny.”

“That makes two of us,” Hermione added to Harry’s surprise. He could not believe his two Consorts were offering to have sex with his other women. He wondered how they’d react. He knew he could order them to and then enjoy the scene, but he was not going to do that.

“I won’t order any of you to sex up my Consorts, but if any of you feel like it, be my and I guess their guest.”

To Harry’s surprise Astoria stood up, removed her silk robes and walked over to Luna. She straddled the blonde. “She asked first,” Astoria said just before leaning in for a deep kiss from the older witch. Harry and the others watched as Astoria and Luna began fondling each other then began breaking their kisses and taking turns suckling each other’s breasts.

Daphne then stood, took off her robes and walked over to Hermione. As her sister had done, she straddled Hermione’s lap and the new couple were soon all over each other as well. Watching to his left and right as the two couples continued their explorations had the result

Harry thought it would have as his Basilisk was readying to come out and play some more.

Oddly, the other three remained where they were although Dora seemed to be fidgeting a little.

“Is something wrong?” he asked them as he heard slight moans to either side of him.

“It’s called ‘Girl Sex’ for a reason, Harry,” Mallory said. “A sexually and magically mature witch has no need for it and no real interest in it. It’s one of the ways a witch knows she has reached that maturity. She no longer has the urge for that sort of stimulation and no longer finds ‘girl sex’ alluring in a way. There are rare exceptions, but ... well I guess you can say it’s not our thing anymore.”

“I might give it a try,” Dora said. “But they’re busy.”

“Oh?” Harry asked.

“I’m not quite twenty-two, Harry,” Dora said. “Full maturity is sometime between twenty and twenty-five or so and I must say watching that still turns me on, so I guess I’m still a bit of a girl, although it’s probably magically. I’ll wait and see if any of them want more help.

“Fine, I guess but I could use a little help here!”

“That is something we can do,” Minerva said.

“But once Minnie and I have our Harry fun, we’ll leave you young people to your fun,” Mallory added as Minerva stepped out of her robes.

“Would you like a ride?” Harry asked.

Minerva walked over and straddled Harry, kissing him passionately. When the kiss broke, she allowed Harry access to her breasts and Harry eagerly began suckling. Following a gasp, Minerva said: “I love

riding you, Harry!” Minerva then adjusted herself and eased herself onto Harry’s full erection, moaning sexily as he filled her void. She was soon thrusting slowly and alternating between kissing Harry and allowing him to suckle her breasts. Harry noted that when she was not kissing Harry, she was watching the other couples.

As Harry listened to the moans of pleasure arising from five beautiful witches, he realized that despite his initial misgivings several days before, he really did enjoy having sex with this sixty-eight year old witch now riding him for all she was worth. Despite her age, she was still quite attractive and sexy. She was also a good lay and Harry really enjoyed her eager attitude.

Minerva, Hermione and Luna soon announced their orgasms. Harry was nowhere near his. Despite her own orgasm, Minerva kept pumping Harry and now began begging him to make her come again as Harry watched Daphne and Hermione and Luna and Astoria change places and listened as the two Slytherins began to add their own moans of pleasure as Hermione and Luna eagerly lapped away at them.

Several minutes later, Minerva and Harry came within seconds of each other. Once she caught her breath, Minerva released him from her core and shifted around to cuddle in his lap and watch the show around her. Soon, the Greengrass girls reached their climaxes almost at the same time. Harry was of the opinion that this had easily been the most erotic thing he had ever heard of, much less did.

“That was fun,” Astoria announced after several minutes of cuddling with her new lover. “Can we do that again?”

“Let’s let Mallory Harry fun,” Dora said. “But I’m game if you are.”

Harry saw a large smile spread across Astoria’s face as she stood and walked over to where Dora was sitting, climbing into the chair with the older witch and immediately kissing her with abandon. Daphne switched to the other side of Harry to start her fun with Luna while Hermione just sat back and watched the others. Harry had to admit, watching his girls like this got him ready for Mallory much

faster than he would have thought possible and she was on his lap even before the real Girl Sex had begun. Harry brought Mallory over the edge twice before finishing as well and after a brief cuddle, she and Minerva left. But the other four were still enjoying each other and Harry was well into pleasuring Hermione before they finished with each other.

Harry did not know how long this playtime lasted. All he knew is that Daphne replaced Hermione at some point. He watched the others as well, realizing they were switching their 'girl' partners. By the time he and Luna finished their time together, he was utterly knackered, but not about to let Astoria down. As she began her time with him, he wondered if his life could get any weirder.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Lady Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (9/21/80) (Ra-4); CONSORT HOUSE OF BLACK 7/5/96.
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).



## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT: FAMILY MATTERS

SUNDAY, JULY 7, 1996 - Potter Manor

Harry woke up in what he would call the middle of a Witch Pile. Hermione was to his left and Minerva to his right with Luna sleeping on top of him in one big, group cuddle. It was very warm and comfortable, Harry thought, but he was also very sore.

The “girl sex” show that had followed Luna’s “introduction” to the family was not the end of the day for Harry. His ladies wanted far more. The next Harry Play Time began immediately after lunch following a length conversation about the joys of sex in general and Astoria stating that while she had the pleasure of tasting and being tasted by all her “younger sisters,” she didn’t get to taste Harry or enjoy his wonderful tongue. This led to a marathon of three-ways. Astoria had decided she wanted Harry to have her for dessert and he was more than willing to oblige. But while he pleasured Astoria with his tongue, someone else decided to suck his cock. Thus began a long second sex session where he orally pleasured each of his women while another sucked him off.

He was sure they were all more than finished by the end, but how wrong he was. Soon, Daphne and Hermione were snogging each other while one rode him and the other sat on his face. He went through that “torture” seven times as seven pairs of witches rode him that way. Then, of course, they all insisted he take them while they pleasured another one of the witches (even the two older ones because it involved Harry directly and they knew it turned him on), and who was he to say “no.” It took all of his teenage libido and developing metamorph skills to keep it going and make sure each of his women were fully satisfied. Yesterday, he was basically having sex all day long, aside from meals and occasional breaks for necessary but annoying interruptions. He was certain that his girls were spiking his food with something. Metamorphagus abilities aside, he was certain his monster should have died some time ago, or at least run off screaming in fear. By the time they finally let him head off to bed, he was convinced he could now rest. How wrong he was as

his partners for that evening - Hermione, Luna and Minerva - made it quite clear they were not done with him yet.

By Harry's count, "Little Harry" had been asked to perform at least thirty-four times yesterday. That had to be some kind of record, he thought. But it was also more than he could truly handle if this morning was any indication. Despite waking up in a delectable pile of gorgeous, naked witch flesh, nothing was happening down there. Since this bizarre new life had begun, Little Harry always woke up expecting to play with a witch or two before breakfast. Not today.

"Hmmm," a female voice sighed. "This is nice." It was Luna.

"Mmmm," Hermione and Minerva tended to agree.

"I think you killed it," Harry said.

"Killed what?" Luna asked.

"This!" Harry said wiggling his hips. Luna was lying atop his sleeping member.

"Me?" she asked.

"The lot of you!"

This earned an evil sounding giggle from his three bed companions.

"It seems," Hermione said, "even our Master of Pleasure has his limits."

"Does this mean no Harry Time today?" Luna said with a pout.

"Er...just not now," Harry said. "I hope," he added.

"Oh goodie! Well, not about now as I wouldn't mind a Harry wake up but ..."

“We can still take our bath with him,” Hermione said.

“Oh goodie!”

“Look what the cat dragged in,” Neville chuckled. Harry looked much the worse for wear as he entered the dining room for breakfast. Seated around the table were all of his witches along with Neville, Neville’s parents and Neville’s two witches.

“What happened to you?” Alice asked in real concern.

“They happened to me!” Harry said as he took his seat. He was pointing at the seven witches.

“Luna?” Susan asked. “She was involved?”

Harry nodded. “She became my Consort, Lady Luna Black Friday and yesterday was...”

“We welcomed her to our family,” Astoria said, “with loads of Harry time.”

“Congratulations,” Susan said with a smile.

“Thank you,” Luna said. “It’s been nice.”

“So why is Harry so knackered?” Neville asked.

“We experimented,” Luna said. “We wanted to know if it was possible to tire our Harry out with sex and it is.”

“Do I need to hear this?” Alice asked.

“No,” Luna conceded. “But it’s fun seeing how red Harry can get.”

“And there only seven of you now,” Harry moaned.

“You can’t say you didn’t enjoy it,” Astoria giggled, “‘cause we know you did. I enjoyed it too.”

“You and me both, Sissy,” Daphne added. “Relax, Harry. It’s not like we expect that all the time.”

“Just most the time,” Astoria giggled.

“Please?” Alice said. “I am trying to eat and do not need to hear about the exploits of a teenage male. Neville please tell me you and yours are not so - er - active.”

“I only have two witches to play with,” Neville said. “But they have kept me busy.”

Alice rolled her eyes. “There is a reason why young men should not have Concubines.”

“Now Alice,” Minerva said, “it’s not like they chose this. They kind of stumbled into it. And, I am certain your son is a very decent young man and treats his ladies very well.”

“He does indeed,” Amber said. “He’s taking us shopping today.”

“And you and Dad,” Neville added. “We all came here with the clothes on our backs and could use new wardrobes. That will include formal wear, I’m told.”

“Excuse me?” Alice said.

“House Longbottom will be invited to various social functions requiring formal attire as guests and best friends of the Duke and his ladies,” Hermione said. “You are going to be here a while, after all.”

“I’m really not comfortable with...” Alice began.

“Alice,” Frank said, “we are stuck here. I’d much rather this be our life than what we had only a few days ago. Who knows? I seem inspired by this people.”

“How so?” Alice asked.

“We never wanted Neville to be an only child, did we?”

Alice blushed.

“So that’s settled then. We Longbottoms are staying and Neville’s gonna have a brother or sister.”

“Well you may want to get to that,” Susan said. “Amber and I are working on your grandchildren.”

“Oh dear,” Alice sighed. “I’m too young to be a grandmother.”

“Too late,” Susan said. “Cause we’re not waiting.”

“Do tell me, Harry, that you are?”

“I could, but I’d be lying,” Harry smirked. “What my ladies want, they will have and that includes little ones.”

“But you said,” Astoria began.

“You did say you wanted to wait a bit, Story,” Harry said.

“I did. But not forever.”

“No, not forever. Changing the rules.”

“Harry,” Hermione began.

“I am the Duke,” Harry said with mock seriousness. “When Story is as old as Luna, she can choose to become a Mum.”

“So,” Astoria said, “next summer?”

“If you want,” Harry replied with a smile.

“Thanks Harry Love,” Astoria replied with a smile. “But be forewarned, my sister and I are very competitive.”

“Which means?”

“We’ll each want to be the one with the larger family,” Daphne said. “So don’t be surprised if we have several kids each.”

Harry could only roll his eyes. “And I got eighteen others to worry about.”

“Eighteen?” Alice asked. “Surely not eighteen other - er - wives. You already have seven!”

“By the end of the summer it will be twenty,” Hermione said.

“What? Why?”

“The Auction,” Hermione replied. “A lot of friends are on the block and we do not want them ... well, we know what might happen to them and they are better off here with us. But...”

“But what?”

“There are more witches for sale than I can handle,” Harry said. “Hermione won’t let me not buy them, but then what? I’ll be hard pressed as it is with the twenty we’re planning on. But that’s not all and...”

“We were wondering, Susan,” Hermione said, “whether Neville might help out?”

“You’re suggesting we take on some additional concubines?” Susan asked.

Hermione nodded.

“How many?”

“Twelve for certain.”

“Twelve?” Susan and Alice cried out.

“Well, if you don’t want to help them, I can understand why,” Hermione said. “I mean, it is a lot to ask of anyone and I know Neville would probably want to treat them right which means less time for you and Amber and such and that is a huge sacrifice and all.”

“You seem to be willing,” Alice said.

“I’m not thrilled with this twist in life,” Hermione admitted. “Were it entirely up to me, none of this would be necessary. But we don’t live in a perfect world and it would kill me to let them suffer the way others have in their situation when I could have helped. It would kill Harry too.”

Susan sighed. “Just what are you asking of us?”

“Suze?” Neville began.

“Let’s hear her out,” Susan replied. Amber nodded in agreement.

“Well,” Hermione said, “in addition to Luna and I and our five sisters, we are going to acquire Ginny Weasley this week.”

“Why?” Susan asked. “How? The auction isn’t this week is it?”

“No, next Monday,” Hermione replied. “Ginny sent Harry some pies laced with a near overdose of amorentia.”

“You’re joking.”

“I wish she were,” Harry said. “We suspected her mother might put her up to something like this. I will admit, it does seem a little out of character for Ginny.”

“Try a lot,” Luna said. “The girl hasn’t even made a run at you, has she?”

Harry shook his head.

“It’s not her style to resort to love potions as a first option. She’s been very good at getting the boys she wants without it. My guess is it was her Mum and maybe she knew about it. Personally, I think she simply looked the other way or didn’t know. But none of that matters.”

“It would be considered an attack on your house regardless of whether the girl knew,” Frank nodded. “And you do have the right to claim a daughter as compensation so as to avoid a feud.”

“Which I would not want in any case,” Harry nodded. “Not all that family are a problem. Bill and his Consort have already relocated here and I’d guess the twins are not party to such things.”

“Ron, on the other hand,” Hermione growled.

“Probably knew,” Dora added. “We have reason to believe he has designs on Hermione and they are not honorable ones.”

“So, you’re going to take their daughter in payment,” Frank nodded.

“Yes,” Harry said.

“It’ll destroy their family reputation,” Frank noted.

Harry shrugged. “Being dosed up on love potions is not my idea of an ideal life. Taking her and binding her as a concubine seems the lesser of evils under the circumstances. She’ll be brought in as a full blown Concubine. The only thing I won’t do is whore her out. If it turns



out she's mostly innocent, she'll get the same offer my other witches have received."

"Which is?" Alice asked.

"She can continue her education. She can choose her career if she wants one and I'll support it. She can have children. She can become love bonded, if she wants. Same things my other wives in all but law have."

"All your women get that?" Alice asked.

"All will be offered it," Harry said. "So far, all have accepted."

"Neville?" Alice asked.

"Amber has the same rights," he replied. "Assuming Susan and Amber agree to more, I would offer the others the same rights."

"Good boy," Susan said with a smile as Amber kissed his cheek.

"Yes Dears," Neville said earning a laugh from the gathering.

"And what are your thoughts on this, Professor McGonagall," Alice asked.

"It's Minerva, please," Minerva replied. "And my tenure at Hogwarts shall end on Wednesday at the reading of the Will of Sirius Black. That aside, I support my family and my husband in this. And in case you have not picked up on it, Alice, Harry is now my husband. I may be a lesser wife as compared to Hermione and Luna, but I am still his wife and could not be prouder of him or the others. So much has been thrust upon him, and yet he is ... well, he carries the weight with such aplomb that I cannot help but be enamored by him. That and when he found he inherited me, he accepted that and me into his family without seemingly any second thoughts. He had offered me a chance to bear his child and, while I'm not sure I can, should that come to pass, it will be my honor to be the mother of his child."

“I see your son in a similar vein. He is brave, this is true. He had blossomed into a remarkable young man and considering who he was but a handful of years ago, to see him as he is now is nothing short of amazing. His Susan should count herself among the luckiest women on Earth and Amber at least as much. I am certain he will continue to make the Longbottom name stand for doing what is right even if he should choose to expand his family by several witches.”

Neville and Harry were both blushing under Minerva’s praise. Before all this had happened, they respected her immensely. Yet to learn that she respected them as well? It was an honor neither expected.

“I was kind of hoping you might see my problems with this,” Alice said.

“I’m sorry, Alice, but I cannot. The young women we are talking about are students of mine. I know what they might face if we do nothing. They are talented young people and face lives as at best domestic servants and at worst prostitutes because our society sees them as being worth no more. Yet they are worth more, Alice. And Harry will offer them more as I’m sure Neville would as well.”

“What are you asking of us?” Susan asked.

“Well,” Harry replied, “Hermione thinks I should have a total of twenty women bound to me. I already have seven and can tell you I’m not sure about twenty. But she has said I should, so... With Ginny, that will give me eight. Currently, there are five Hufflepuffs, five Gryffindors, four Ravenclaws, three Slytherins up for action, as well as two girls from St. George’s and St. Patrick’s and one from St. Andrews. Well, two really, but the other one is - er - well, I won’t be her first - er - well whatever. I’m buying the girls who did not go to Hogwarts, so that leaves me with room for six more. As I have already - er- bought two Slytherins... Well, okay, I did buy them but prefer to see what I did as rescuing them...”

“Thank you, Harry,” Astoria said.

“And for the record,” Daphne added, “you did rescue us. And you did a lot more.”

“Which is one of the many reasons why we love you.”

“Course it helps that he’s so cute...”

“And loveable...”

“And ... well, once we are alone again, we most definitely want everything else he is.”

Harry rolled his eyes. “Didn’t you two have enough of me yesterday?”

“No,” the two girls answered in unison.

“There’s no such thing as too much Harry,” Astoria said.

“I beg to differ,” Hermione countered. “I can tell you that there can be too much Harry. But it is a torment I was and am willing to bear.”

After the giggles subsided, Harry cleared his voice. “As I said, I already have two evil and devious Slytherins...”

“We’re not evil!” Daphne exclaimed.

“You might not be,” Harry chuckled, “but a lot of what happened after lunch was Astoria’s idea. Torture it was.”

“You weren’t complaining then,” Astoria said sticking out her tongue.

“I am now,” Harry whined. “My poor equipment. They done broke it!”

“You’ll recover,” Mallory said with a chuckle.

“Yeah,” Harry said with a false pout, “I suppose.”

“He’s so cute when he does that,” Daphne said to her sister.

“Girls!” Hermione and Minerva said in unison.

“Sorry,” the two Greengrass sisters replied.

“Anyway,” Harry said, “so that means I’ll need two Gryffs, two Puffs and two Claws to complete my - er - collection. That would leave Neville with the rest. Now, I’ve already selected my two Gryffs and one of my Claws.”

“Who?” Neville and Susan asked.

“From Gryffindor, Katie Bell and Parvati Pati and from Ravenclaw...”

“Don’t tell me you took Padma as well,” Neville said.

“Okay,” Harry smiled, “I won’t. But I did.”

“Two of the hottest girls in our class,” Neville started.

“Hey!” Susan said.

“It’s you I love, Suze,” Neville said softly. “Always has been and always will be.”

“That’s better.”

“Am I chopped liver?” Amber said with a pout as Neville kissed his Consort.

“And you are my first best friend,” Neville said giving her a kiss as well. “So who are we really talking about?”

“These are the Hufflepuffs,” Hermione said passing a list to Susan.

“Hannah?” Susan shrieked. “But she’s a half blood! Her mum is a Muggle Born. And her sister Patti? How? Why?”

“Can’t say,” Hermione answered. “It’s not Dumbledore’s sale number. Best guess is that their father is selling them for some reason.”

“Why would you sell your own children?” Alice asked.

“Our father did,” Daphne said. “He did it to avoid the Death Eaters killing us all. Then again, he did it after he knew Harry here was the buyer.”

“Harry?” Alice shrieked.

“There was a plan to enslave us to Draco Malfoy,” Daphne replied. “Little git and his father made it such that the real ‘buyer’ could only be Harry. Harry had to ‘buy’ us to keep us safe and our parents and younger sisters.”

“The specific reasons why a magical guardian sells the girls under his charge vary,” Minerva said, “but the bottom line is always money. We women are little more than chattel to many wizards.”

“And we can’t change the system,” Harry nodded. “All we can do is help those we can.”

“Neville,” Susan said firmly, “you’re not going to let my friend and her sister go, are you?”

“No dear,” Neville sighed. “I guess I’m in Harry.”

“Pick three of the Puffs,” Harry said. “I’ll take the other two.”

“Hannah Abbott, age sixteen,” Neville said as Susan nodded, “Patti Abbott age fourteen ... and Megan Jones, age sixteen. The others are awfully young.”

“That leaves me with Eleanor Bromstone, age thirteen and, yikes, Cathy Abrams, age twelve. You’re right about her being a little young.”

“She wouldn’t be on the list if she wasn’t physically old enough,” Dora added.

“Oh goodie,” Luna said.

Everyone looked at her.

“It means they probably haven’t had the talk yet. We get to give them the talk!”

“The talk?” Frank asked. “You mean about sex?”

“She means about sexual release,” Minerva replied. “Adolescent witches need such release as they mature for their magical development. Girls are encouraged to find such release on a daily basis. Of course, at school we do not recommend finding it with boys because of the possibility of conception.”

“Do we have to talk about this?” Neville complained blushing.

“But I thought you liked giving me my releases,” Susan said with a pout.

“I do,” Neville replied blushing. “But do we have to talk about sex in front of my parents? It’s too weird.”

Alice giggled. “Thank you Neville. That’s very thoughtful of you. But as you are married, you should not worry about what I think. So long as you treat your women with the respect they deserve, I won’t hold societies problems against you.”

“Thanks Mum. Who’s next?” he added turning to Harry.

“You get the three Gryffs,” Harry said. “That’s Leanne Tinker, age seventeen...”

“She’s cute,” Neville said. “Was pretty nice to me as well.

“Lavender Brown, age sixteen...”

“The gossip queen?” Susan asked.

“One of the gossip twins actually,” Hermione replied. “The other is Parvati Patil, who Harry took for some reason.”

“Can’t split up a family,” Harry shrugged.

“You just wanted twins,” Neville said with a smirk. “Don’t blame you. I’d a taken them if you hadn’t. That’s okay. Lavender’s got a nice rack on her.”

“Boys!” Hermione and Susan huffed.

“My Mum said that nature gave us boobies so boys would notice us,” Luna said.

“We would notice you eventually,” Harry chuckled. “Those just makes us notice sooner. And speaking about boobs, your other Gryff is Natalie McDonald, age fourteen. She’s starting to show a nice rack as well.”

“The Ravenclaws?” Susan asked.

“There’s Cho Chang, age seventeen,” Harry said, “Su Li and Morag McDougal age sixteen and Laura Madley, age thirteen.”

“Take Madley,” Luna said. “The other three weren’t very nice to me.”

Harry looked at Neville. “Fine by me,” Neville said. “That’s three Claws. Who are my snakes?”

“Natasha Adair, age thirteen,” Harry read, “Teresa Murdoch, age fourteen and Tracey Davis, age sixteen.”

“That’s not so bad,” Neville said. “Aside from Daphne, Tracey was the only one in our year who didn’t look like she hit a few branches falling out of the ugly tree.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment,” Daphne growled.

“Sorry,” Neville said sheepishly. “I meant that you and Tracey are the only pretty ones in that house in our year. Thank Merlin Millicent Bulstrode isn’t on the list.”

“You can’t even say she has a nice personality,” Daphne agreed.

“Okay, that’s thirteen including Amber,” Susan said. “When you suggested fourteen, did that include me?” she asked Hermione.

“No,” Hermione replied. “But that’s all the new ones. The others up for sale have prior experience.”

“As did I,” Amber said.

“So you want me to buy an ‘experienced’ woman?” Neville asked.

Hermione nodded. She slid over a page and Neville and Susan looked at it.

“Penelope Clearwater, age twenty,” Susan read. “She was Head Girl a couple years ago, wasn’t she?”

“I thought she was Percy Weasley’s girl,” Neville added.

“She was Head Girl,” Minerva said. “As for being Percy’s girl? He apparently bought her when they were fifteen.”

“Don’t you have to be legally an adult to purchase?” Susan asked.

“He probably used a straw man.”

“A what?”



“He got an adult to buy her for him,” Minerva explained.

“There’s also a rumor he won her in a card game,” Harry added.

“Which brings up another question,” Frank said. “Harry and Neville are only fifteen.”

“Harry is legally an adult thanks to his Godfather Sirius Black,” Minerva said.

“And Gran emancipated me when she died,” Neville added.

“I’ll be making all the purchases,” Harry said. “The asking price for these women is between two and three hundred Galleons give or take. They should sell for more at auction normally. I’ve already placed blind bids on the lot of them. Two thousand Galleons each. I’m told no one has ever sold for that much which pretty much means they are ours.”

“And Neville has to pay you back?” Alice asked.

“Five Galleons a head should do it,” Harry said. “I’m not buying them to profit. I’m buying them to give them a better life than they could expect and to basically mess up the entire market.”

“This is going to be difficult,” Neville said looking at Susan and Amber. “I mean how can I keep that many women - er - happy?”

“Aside from just being yourself, Neville,” Hermione said, “it’s just a question on scheduling. Luna and I will be working out a schedule for Harry so that he has time with each of his ladies, and sleeps with all of us on a regular basis.”

“I was also thinking about how are we going to bring them here,” Neville said. “You don’t expect me to bond with all of them at once, do you?”

“That’s up to you,” Harry said. “As I understand it, our only deadline is September 1st. We can’t take them for binding when they are in school, apparently. I’m thinking of bringing them in one or two at a time, beginning with the day of the Auction. Probably it will only be three bonding days a week, maybe less.”

“Why?”

“I think it would go easier for them if it were not all at once or too quickly. One a day, maybe two. Certainly two when it comes to sisters. Probably bring them in on Monday’s Wednesdays and Fridays. That way they have the weekend to relax and go shopping and stuff.”

“Shopping?” Neville asked.

“Clothes,” Susan said. “They’ll need new outfits and such.”

“Some may arrive with their possessions,” Amber said. “Most will probably arrive with just the clothes on their backs like we did.”

“Which is what we’ll be doing today,” Hermione said. “We were going to go last weekend, but with all that’s been happening, it just didn’t work out. While Dora has managed to get us everyday clothes if we needed them, Daphne has pointed out that we need more formal wear than most due to our status. Harry is a Duke after all. Luna and I are his consorts. And the rest of us are his Ladies and we need to look the part.”

“And a shopping trip has the added advantage of allowing me to recover from yesterday,” Harry added. “I swear even now it seems there are not enough hours to get things done. And it’s only going to get worse!”

“Harry, a little scheduling should...” Hermione began.

“It will help,” Harry replied. “But I’m not sure it’ll find the time for everything, Hermione. With all the projects I’ve already started, my

time is mostly filled. Add to that once my magic is unbound I'll have to retrain. Then there's school, which I know you won't let me skive off; although I can't do that because I need to learn as much as I can for when I have to face Voldemort and then Dumbledore, which is probably the only way we have to defeat the bastards. Eventually, once all is up and running and I'm finished with school and the war is over, I might be able to slow down. But until then, I think there not enough hours in the day. Then add to it your needs and stuff and ... it's a lot, Hermione."

"Well," Hermione said, "I might have an answer to your time problem. It can wait because most of your time problems won't begin until August."

Harry raised an eyebrow. She knew something. He knew she knew something. He also knew it wasn't important right this moment. Still, he was curious. But before he could pursue the matter, he was interrupted.

"Milord?" a voice called and Harry turned and saw Dobby at the door.

"Yes Dobby?"

"Mr. Remus Lupin is here and requests to speak with you and your family."

Harry nodded. "Send him in."

Remus stepped into the Dining Room. He said good morning to everyone. "And I hear congratulations are in order," he said finally. "Harry sent me a letter Friday telling of your bonding as Consort, Lady Luna."

"Thank you Professor Lupin," Luna said.

"I've not been your professor in two years," he began.

“Oh, but you were such a good one,” Luna replied. “One of the best I think. It was such a pity you couldn’t stay on, but Daddy did say that Fudge has it in for Werewolves and just about anything or anyone who does not bribe him regularly. And thank you, Professor. I am very pleased Harry wanted me to be his Lady Black.”

“Thank you Luna. Now Harry, I bet you’re wondering why I am here this morning?”

“I wasn’t expecting to see you today,” Harry nodded. “Don’t tell me I have another ball to attend today?”

“It looked like you enjoyed the last one, Harry.”

“I did actually. But it’s not something I want to do every week.”

“No, I suppose not,” Remus smiled. “And no, there is not one today so you can relax.”

“Actually, we’re going shopping,” Harry said. “That’s why we left the Manor last Sunday only to get roped into the Investiture and Ball. We still need to do this and last week was rather busy.”

“Well, I’m not here to ruin your plans for today. But I am here about your plans in a broader sense. First of all, we need to talk about the status of Lady Luna here.”

“She’s my Consort,” Harry began.

“A fact which can’t be changed,” Remus said. “What I meant is ... well ... Okay, I’ll just tell you. In the past, when the heir became the Duke, it automatically ‘raised’ his siblings to titles nobility, assuming they were of age of course. The Duke’s sisters, assuming they lived here, became Baronesses and the Duke’s brothers became Counts. Basically, as it now stands your sister will become the Baroness of Broadmoor upon her seventeenth birthday.”

“And what will that do to her?”

“Not much really. It’s just a title. But should you entertain the Queen, for example, she would automatically be invited. The High Council has suggested we also elevate Luna. In her case, they propose she becomes the Countess of Darby.”

“And I take it there’s some sort of ceremony involved?” Harry groaned.

“There is,” Remus said. “It’s not unlike what happened for you and the Duchess Hermione last weekend. Then there’s also the fact that Luna is one of the others slated to be knighted by Her Majesty’s government as well. And not just Luna, Neville is eligible for those honors as will be Ginny Weasley, if you bind her to you as you’re planning.”

“Okay. Fine. When?”

“How’s next Sunday look for you?”

“I’ll have to ask my scheduling assistant...”

“You’re free,” Hermione said.

“Couldn’t you find a way for me to be busy, say until sometime much later?”

“I could,” Hermione chuckled, “but I won’t. So get used to the idea.”

“Great.”

“I thought you liked the last one?”

“I did, surprisingly. It’s all a bit much, though. Three weeks ago, I couldn’t imagine any of this. I had no idea I was or would be a Duke or anything. I was famous, which you know I hated, but not all this. Now, I’m head of a bloody country and I suppose I’m stuck. Remus

has told me that my ancestors were brought up knowing this stuff. I got chucked in the deep end without so much as a by your leave.”

“Blame Dumbledore,” Remus said. “Had he not taken a sick interest in your life, your parents would still be around and you would be decades or more away from the titles. Because of him, they’re dead and you’re the youngest Duke ever.”

“Okay. Okay. I get it,” Harry groaned.

“Great!” Remus said. “I’m sure you and your ladies will love it! And of course we can’t forget the Longbottoms as Sir Neville will be a guest of honor as well.”

“I have nothing to wear,” Susan and Alice both moaned.

“Hence today’s shopping trip,” Daphne said. “Timing is perfect, don’t you think? Astoria and I have been to Pottersport a few times. We know where the good shops are.”

“Thanks,” Susan said. “But it’s not just the shops. I really have no idea what I need.”

“You leave that to us,” Astoria said. “True, there are no robes here like back in Britain, but they have wonderful clothes.”

“We’ll see you looking like a Lady,” Daphne added.

“Thanks,” Susan said with a smile.

“Actually, I’ll probably help the girls. While I love Harry to bits now, something tells me he should not be allowed to shop for suits without a ‘trained’ eye and as Sissy here knows the shops as well as I do, she’ll take the boys around.”

“They will look grand,” Astoria said.

“Fine,” Harry grumbled. While he truly needed a decent wardrobe and while he had never really been shopping for clothes, he had heard over the years about women and shopping and knew this would be a chore for him. “Anything else Remus? Please say yes as I want to delay this fate as long as possible.”

Remus shrugged. “I do have additional business, but I’m afraid it won’t take too long.”

“What business then?”

“You want to evacuate the Muggle Borns,” Remus said. “And just how do you figure to accomplish that? And their families as well?”

“Er - porkeys?”

“Except our wards would require you to authorize each person by name, Harry. We’re talking thousands! Kingsley got us a copy of the ledger from the Department of Mysteries. It lists all the Muggle Borns in Britain, and their families and where they live. We now know of every Muggle Born who has been detected regardless of age. The Enemy will have access to this list eventually, if he does not already. To allow thousands to magically transport would require us to undermine our Wards and risk invasion.”

“So how can we save them?”

“By non-magical means,” Remus said. “You would be hard pressed to authorize each person by name, but if you authorize the flights carrying them...”

“Flights?”

“Airplanes Harry. The wards will let any approved flight in. It’s how we move our children to Britain for school as those flights are approved. But you would need to approve additional flights to evacuate the Muggle Borns. Moreover, we need more planes.”

“Planes? You mean a regular airline won’t do?”

“We need special planes, Harry. Magic can muck up electronics unless the right charms are placed upon them to counter the interference. A plane load of wizards could well be a problem even if we confiscated wands for the flight. Many will be young and accidental magic is a problem against unshielded electronics. So, we need planes that are shielded. We have some, but not enough to run an airlift like you suggested.”

“And why not magic?” Harry asked.

“It can be detected, Harry,” Remus replied. “You can only Floo from Gringotts London to ours here. They may allow you some leeway for friends and such, but I doubt the Goblins will allow you to turn their Banks into a bloods travel terminal. Portkeys and apparition are monitored and the British Ministry would know something was up if we began a massive magical evacuation. But they don’t monitor Heathrow or other airports and we have airfields. We have one at Port of Darby and there is RAF Pottersport, although with your plans for a new city, we have included a new airfield in those plans as well.

“What we need are planes. Our Transportation Minister has opened contract talks with a company called Bombardier Aerospace, who makes commercial planes. We just need your signature to seal the deal for eight Model 300 turboprops. They can carry up to fifty people a flight. Loads easier than anything as they are relatively short range commuter planes which even the Muggles would not suspect as being used for an airlift.”

“And their belongings?” Hermione asked.

“The planes will be hardened against magical interference,” Remus replied. “We can shrink and lighten whatever they have for shipment and not risk the planes.”

“Even cars?”

“We are magical, Hermione.”



“What about pilots?” Harry asked.

“We have enough, Harry,” Remus said. “We just need the planes. We figure there about twenty-thousand Muggle Borns. Not all will or can evacuate, but many will. Throw in their Muggle families, and we could well be looking at double the current population. We’ll begin with the younger ones; those who have yet to send any kid to magical school. They and their families don’t yet exist as far as the magical government is concerned and won’t be until they fail to show up for school. We can then evacuate the families of older ones, the ones still in school getting that lot on the Holidays. Finally, we can seek out the older ones. The point is with planes they can get here simply with your authorizing the flights, not the names Harry. They can get here and be safe.”

“How long?”

“It’ll take some time, Harry. Convincing many to pack up and leave, even those who know how bad it is, this will take time. The planes means we can move them, not that they will be moved. But without the planes, we can do nothing really.”

“And the wards? I’ve been told they’re impossible to penetrate.”

“The pilots can fly through them,” Remus replied. “Your grandfather gave them leave to.”

“That’s all well and good, but the passengers?”

“If you authorize the flights, they can pass through as well.”

“And if one it a Death Eater? What about under polyjuice or the Imperious Curse?”

“A Death Eater under any guise will die at the ward line, period,” Remus said. “An innocent under the curse will be freed upon crossing the ward line if the curse was aimed at you or against your country.

The enemy's attempts to invade are doomed to failure. This is why this country has never feared attack or war."

"And the Muggles? We had a base full of them once. What about them?"

"We can't be found by them, Harry." Remus said. "Our own ships and planes bring them here. Without those ships and planes, they can never find this place. Anyone who is a threat to you or your country can never find this place or come here and live past the wards, even if you invite them. It's brutally effective, our wards. So you can be rest assured, no one who desires you harm will ever live to set foot in this realm. All we need to care about are those who would be safe here, that being the Muggle Borns and their families. For that, we need planes."

"What do you need from me?" Harry asked.

"Your signature on some forms. The first is to authorize us to buy the planes. The second would allow them to clear the wards with passengers."

"Fine," Harry said. "I'll sign. Anything else?"

"You've said you wanted to raise an army to take back Britain if need be?"

Harry nodded.

"What kind of army?"

"Er ... well an army. Is there a difference?"

"Perhaps. It would take years to train an army of Aurors, Harry. You can train them short of that in a couple of months. But to expect fully combat trained Aurors? Not likely anytime soon. But, if you are willing to cross the magical with the non-magical, that's another story altogether."

“Oh?” Harry asked. “How so?”

“Muggle weapons are quite effective against magic,” Remus replied. “A gun can always defeat a shield charm. True, the charm can defeat the gun once. The first bullet will break the charm but not harm the caster. But muggle weapons fire a lot faster than a spell caster can replace a shield. Moreover, rifles are deadly at far greater range than any wand. Magical skills are still useful. You need magic to defeat wards and to prevent magical transport. But to fight? A gun is as good as a wand in most cases and better than one in the others.”

“What about transfiguration?” Hermione asked. “Surely we could change the gun into a rubber chicken or something?”

“At a hundred yards?” Remus replied. “You can’t hit them with a charm at that range and they can kill you from there. Transfiguration is not a ranged attack. You have to get up close and personal with your target for it to work at all. The Killing Curse is not much use outside of twenty meters ... ten if you care to hit the target ... transfiguration? Five meters or less. Guns are the reason we hid from that world. We can’t fight them with magic. Not if they have enough of them at least. One Muggle with a gun, yeah we could take him. Two? Doubtful. We’d get one and the other would kill us.

“You want an army Harry? Think guns.”

“Guns? I’ll admit I was thinking along those lines but...”

Remus nodded. “A very efficient killing machine they are. Most wizards lack the respect for them. Their best bet if they see them is to run. Guns have an added advantage. It takes years to train a hit wizard who fights with only magic. The Muggles take far less time to turn out a soldier. We’re not magical Britain. There, ownership of a gun is illegal ‘cause it’s even easier than the Killing Curse and far more flexible in a way. But we have no such restrictions on learning. Still, guns don’t grow on trees. We need to buy them. I’d like to talk with Sir Stephen about the possibilities.

“But even then, Harry, unlike magic, guns require ammunition. You can’t really conjure that. True, if you have some, you can conjure more. But you need some to begin with and the ideal way to get more is with a form of replenishing charm. You need a fair amount for that to work.

“Fortunately, you own a controlling interest in a company that makes ammunition, among other things. Their plant is antiquated and they can’t afford to upgrade it or build a new one back in Britain. But we can offer deals here that would make a new munitions plant quite attractive for them and for you, as you are a majority shareholder. It’s one of the plants I’d recommend opening in Jamestown both for the jobs, and because we can get their product cheap. Projections are, we could be quite competitive on the international market as well.”

“You want me to sell ammo?”

“After stocking for us, yes.”

“And how honest is the arms trade?”

“Not very. But most of the less than savory types buy Russian. Your company manufactures NATO standard ammo. The seedy market is less interested in that stuff as there is not a huge market surplus from the Cold War. So basically you’d be supplying the legitimate governments of Europe, once your own needs are met.”

“I see,” Harry said. “You recommend this?”

“We can make ammo for far less cost than making the guns. But ammo still isn’t cheap. I would recommend it as we can sell the surplus for profit, if my numbers are right. And as the Goblins have confirmed them, they are probably right.”

“So you want an ammo plant?”

“It would also supply jobs, Harry,” Remus said.

“Fine,” Harry shrugged. “Does this company have a name?”

Remus nodded. “Grunnings,” he said.

“That’s my Uncle’s company,” Harry said. “I thought they made drills.”

“A division does. It’s another division that makes bullets.”

“Okay. I suppose you want me to sign something for that as well?”

Remus nodded.

The Longbottoms left first as they were going shopping for wands for Frank and Alice and promised to meet up with Harry’s party later in the day. Remus was about to leave when Hermione asked him back into the room, pulling her wand and closing the door behind him with a charm. Harry had not seen that look on Hermione’s face since she had arrived here. He hadn’t seen it since before he became her boyfriend. He knew she was angry about something and whatever it was, it involved more than just something between her and Remus.

“Why’d you do it, Remus?” she asked in an icy tone.

Remus looked perplexed to say the least. “What?”

“I’ve been meaning to talk to you ever since Dora told us,” Hermione continued. “Why’d you do it?”

“Hermione,” Harry said, “what are you talking about?”

“Don’t tell me it didn’t bother you too, Harry James!” Hermione said. “It must have! I saw your face when she told us!”

“Hermione,” Harry said, “I love you more than anything and they say our bond might let us see things others can’t. But I can’t read your mind yet. What are you so upset about?”

“She was not even thirteen, Harry!”

“Oh,” Harry said remembering Dora telling them about her first time.

“You can’t say you were not shocked to learn that someone we trusted would do something like that to an innocent girl!”

“I ... it was ... It was upsetting,” Harry admitted.

“IT WAS SICK!”

Harry nodded in agreement. He was too stunned by everything that was happening at the time to give it much thought, particularly since Dora never brought it up again and thankfully Remus never was foolish enough to ask him for permissions. A part of Harry was grateful that had not happened.

“Why’d you do it, Remus?” Hermione demanded. “Was it because you could? Was it because you wanted your own sex toy – a young one at that? Why?”

“It wasn’t like that,” Remus began.

“And I should believe you?” Hermione said. “Everything I’ve learned says to me you’re lying. Everything I’ve learned says that British Pureblood Wizards ... and you are one, right?”

Remus nodded.

“Everything says many of your types grow up thinking that a concubine is their right! They are born to deflower our girls for no other reason than they can and society turns a blind eye! Why did you do it?”

“It wasn’t like that...” Remus began.

“Then what was it like? You just couldn’t wait to get your paws on her could you? It was either a concubine like her, or wanking off and

you chose her virtue! You figured violating her was not nearly as degrading as doing it yourself!"

"THAT'S NOT IT!" Remus shouted. "SHE HAD TO BE BOUND!"

"HAD TOO?"

"She was under contract! If she wasn't bound, she would be sold at Auction and Merlin knows who would have bought her and what would have happened to her. I tried to find another way, Hermione! Her contract opened three months before I Bound her. What do you think I was doing for those three months? Counting the days until the Hogwarts Express returned?"

"Okay. I was," Remus admitted, "but not for the reasons you seem to think. I tried to find a way to release her from that contract! I didn't find any. There were suggestions in some of what I read that Sirius could have. But then there was this little problem of his being locked up in Azkaban, wasn't there?"

"You thought he was a Death Eater," Harry noted.

"Everyone thought that," Remus said. "I couldn't believe it deep down, but at the time I couldn't prove otherwise."

"Sirius was the only one who I thought might be able to void the contract and spare Dora from her fate. If he was a Death Eater, he wouldn't do it. If he was not, he couldn't do it! One way or another, he was in Azkaban and there was supposedly no way out for him!"

"So, he was of no help. If what I learned was true, Dora would become a concubine regardless of what I did! If I didn't bind her, her contract would be magically transferred to the Auction House at some point and I knew from Mallory what could happen to her. When I was certain there was no other way, I did the best thing I thought I could do; I used my permission to bind her to Sirius. I thought with me, she would at least be spared the worst of it. I vowed to treat her well and allow her as much of a normal life as I could, which was more than she was likely to get otherwise. It was all I could do."

“You didn’t know that the six month rule only applies to women who are already concubines?” Hermione asked incredulously. “You didn’t know that had you done nothing at all, she would never be bound because that contract actually prevented anyone else from doing so?”

“What?” Remus asked.

“She was contracted to Sirius,” Hermione said. “Only Sirius could break the contract or allow it to transfer. So long as Sirius lived, she was safe unless he chose to bind her himself and assuming she had not become a consort by then.”

“Hermione,” Daphne said, “we didn’t know this until a few days ago and that was after Merlin knows how much research and with full access to both the Potter and Black private journals. What he said is what is in the published works.”

“They’re wrong!”

“We know that. But if that’s all he had to go on, you can understand his reasoning.”

“Doesn’t make it right,” Hermione began.

“No,” Daphne agreed. “The whole thing is wrong. We know the bond was not meant to be used the way it typically is used. The way it’s used is and always has been wrong.”

“What do you mean I didn’t have to,” Remus began. “Everything I could find was clear that once Sirius accepted the contract she had to be bound to him within six of bonding age months or the paper could be sold to another purchaser.”

“That is what the recent works on the subject would lead you to believe,” Daphne said. “It is also the custom. But it is neither the magic nor the truth. All contracts for sale of a witch as concubine where the witch has not attained bonding age are merely the right to



bind her. The right need never be ever exercised. It was originally used as a means to prevent another wizard from selling your daughter or forcing you to do so.

“Take Neville’s Consort Susan. Her father died when she was a baby and her House had no Head. She became the ward of another wizard who obviously intended to sell her. Hundreds of years ago, she would have been contracted to a wizard who could be trusted not to sell her ever. That way, should she lose her father, she would not wind up as a concubine. Or, if like Dora, her father fell into debt, she

could not be sold as in theory she was no longer his property. It was a limitation on the power of a magical guardian by taking away that right and giving it to another. If the wizard who held the contract did nothing, the witch could never be bound or sold as a concubine since that right was his alone. And should she become a Consort, the threat would be over.

“The reality was and remains that a one year old witch – for example – is not worth much. You buy her at that age for what? It will be over a decade before you can even think of taking possession of her and by then you might not want to anyway for whatever reason or you may be dead or you may have a wife or Consort who will not allow the deal to go forward. All the deal did was give the buyer the right to decide her fate years and years later. Such a deal was never viewed as an absolute promise to bind the girl. As such, there was never a requirement to do so at any time.

“So if I had done nothing?” Remus began.

“Assuming Sirius did not seek to bind her when he got free of Azkaban, she would not be a concubine today,” Daphne said. “But the custom of selling unborn or infant girls to keep them safe from forced sales died out centuries ago. The notion that the contracts can be void continued as they are usually entered into before it is known whether the girl is magical or not and the bonding magic will not work with a Squib. The books that talk about the bond are from more recent eras when it was falsely assumed that if the girl was a witch and of bonding age she had to be bound. My thinking is this was one

of the ways wizards changed history to perpetuate their sick, little trade.”

“So what’s that mean?” Dora asked.

“It means Remus was misinformed,” Daphne said. “Based upon what he could have read, he thought he was doing the best thing for you. But the truth is not in any books you would find at Flourish & Blotts. We only found it because we have journals going back over a thousand years and the Potters especially documented all that could be known about the bonds. The truth is Sirius should never have given such open permissions or should have withdrawn them all and, even if he had not done so, Remus should have left well enough alone even after learning you were the daughter of people Sirius considered the only real family he had.”

“I’m so sorry Dora,” Remus said with tears in his eyes. Dora did not reply.

“Next you’re going to tell me I didn’t have to bind with any of the others,” Harry groaned, “or you or Astoria, or any of the girls up for sale.”

“Different situations, Harry,” Daphne said. “Astoria and I were a private sale. Ordinarily, you’re right about that. There’s no way for someone not party to that contract to know whether you bound us or not. But Daddy took that Unbreakable Vow. That made it impossible not to bind with us unless you wanted us all to die.”

Harry shook his head.

“Dora, Mallory and Minerva were all bound concubines before you attained any rights to them,” Daphne continued. “They are therefore subject to the ‘Six Month Rule’ which means you had six months from the time they became your right to bind with them or they would have been sold at public Auction. I still haven’t figured out the how of that one, but the record is clear that would be unavoidable.”

“But Minerva’s previous bonder died eight years ago,” Harry said. “Why didn’t that happen with her?”

“Because Charles left me to you in his Will, Harry,” Minerva said. “When your father died, he did not own much in his own name. What he had he divided equally between you and your sister. But as Duke, Charles could not do that. His properties here in Charenwell cannot be divided. It was only his gold and properties in Britain that were passed to James and divided between you two under the terms of James’ Will. Well, all except me. Were I to pass that way, you would have had no choice but to sell me. (Actually, the Executor would have sold me years ago and the money from the sale placed into your respective Trust Accounts.) But I was passed to you directly as Charles did not wish me sold and hoped you would do as you have done. Because I was transferred to an underage wizard, the Six Month Rule did not come into play until the moment you attained your majority.”

“What about Neville’s Amber?” Harry asked.

“Neville got a similar interest in her when his father was declared legally incompetent in 1982,” Daphne said. “Same rule applied. She was ‘under contract’ to him from that date and the Six Month Rule did not begin until he attained his majority upon the death of his Gran. She, of course, had no right to sell Amber at all. Only Neville could do that and only after attaining his majority.”

“So because they were bound already and had been transferred to Neville and me, we had to bind them to us or they would be sold anyway?”

“That’s correct,” Daphne said. “Basically, unless you wanted us to be sent to a hell on earth, you did the only thing you could have done.”

“What about the girls at auction?”

“Different kind of contract. Once they’re paid for, they’re concubines. You either bind with them or they can be sold to someone else next summer.”

“Crap!” Harry exclaimed. “I was hoping for a way around all this!”

“You used your only way out with Clarice,” Daphne said. “As Head of her House, you can negate any sale contract unless she is already bound. Once a woman is a concubine, there’s nothing that can be done to undo the bond. It can be transferred, but it can never be undone. I don’t think any of the girls set for Auction fall under your jurisdiction as Head of the House of Potter or Black – or Duke for that matter as you have similar authority over your subjects. None of the girls up for sale are from here. Sorry Harry.”

Harry shrugged. “Guess we can always hope some get lucky and find their Consort,” he said.

“Harry,” Astoria said, “being your Concubine is very lucky too.”

“I got two madmen who want me dead...”

“I still don’t get that,” Astoria said. “That prophecy thing is most likely about Dumbledore and not Voldemort, yet Voldemort wants you dead just as bad and Dumbledore seems to be more after your money, although over your dead body, of course.”

“Voldemort was led to believe the prophecy was about him,” Harry said. “That’s why he and his followers want me dead. And I can’t ignore that little problem. Add to that I am a powerful wizard who wants nothing to do with him and that’s two reasons for him to be shot of me. As for Dumbledore, of course he wants me dead. But the bastard doesn’t want to get his hands dirty. His whole plot with Ginny was as a fall back in case Voldemort and his Death Eaters failed to kill me before they get knocked on the head. Well that and to get control of my estate.”

“So what do you want?”

“To live a nice, quiet life with a large family,” Harry said. “Although this is getting a little ridiculous. Not that I’m complaining – well not much anyway. But I can’t have that life with those two out there. Voldemort is the more immediate problem. I’m not worried about either of them right now, but that bastard isn’t just after me. The sooner he and his followers are dead, the better off the rest of the world will be. Once he’s gone, I can turn on the other bastard. Who knows? They’re both trying to kill each other. Maybe they’ll get lucky and I won’t have to do anything at all regarding them. But it seems I’ve never been that lucky.”

In the end, Harry would actually appreciate just going shopping for the rest of the day.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE: THE GOOD WEASLEYS

MONDAY, JULY 8th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Duchy of Charenwell.

The meeting was called to order. The large group of those loyal to the Duke was present as they had been a week earlier when that meeting had been interrupted by the attacks in Britain. But there were some additions. Luna was now present not just as a friend of Harry's, but now as Harry's Wife and Consort the Lady Black. Also present were the older Longbottoms and for those who did not reside at the Manor, this was the first they had seen of Alice and Frank in over a decade.

"First," Harry said, "some introductions are in order. I know you met her last week, but I would like to formally introduce my Wife and Consort Lady Luna Black." Harry indicated the young blonde seated to his right. There was a polite applause from the others, louder from the residents of the Manor. "As you may recall, Luna was one of The Ministry Six attacked last week and brought to this Manor by Dora. She has been a dear friend of mine for about a year and if there was any young witch I would wish for my Lady Black, it was and is her."

"Congratulation Lord and Lady Black," Remus said.

"You got enough time for all them ladies laddie?" Mad-eye snarked.

"It requires management skills," Harry said with a smile, "but I would say yes."

"More than enough time," Daphne added with a smile.

"That will probably change when training and schooling starts," Minerva said. "But, then again, we shall enjoy it while it lasts."

"Indeed we shall," Luna said with a blissful smile, "especially our group activities."

"That borders on too much information," Remus said shaking his head.

Harry cleared his throat. "I would also like to welcome to our circle Frank and Alice Longbottom who have been missing in a way for over fourteen years."

"It's really them?" Mad-eye asked. "But the healers said they were incurable."

"Obviously they were wrong," Harry said. "Mallory?" Mallory spent the next few minutes explaining what had happened to the Longbottoms all those years ago and how they had recovered, as well as their long term prognosis. Neville then followed, thanking all who had made his family reunion possible and explaining how it was he remained Lord Longbottom.

"So they've been missing from St. Mungo's for almost a week?" Kingsley asked. "I'm surprised that no one reported it."

"Probably no one really noticed," Mallory said. "The paperwork was all in order stating that the Longbottoms were being relocated to a Sanitarium overseas, which in a way is true."

"As strange as this place is," Frank said, "it's far saner than what Alice and I were going through."

"And what are your plans?" Moody asked as pleasantly as the gruff warrior was capable.

"Well," Alice replied, "to get our health back, of course. Get our magical skills back as well. But mainly, we plan to be here for our son and his family and for Harry and his family as well. I am his Godmother, after all. That, and once we are capable, maybe add a few other Longbottoms to the family lists. Although, it seems our son has got a head start on us in that regard."

"Oh?" a few voices asked.

"Amber's expecting," Neville said with pride.



“Congratulations!” several voices asked.

“Amber?” Bill asked.

“Neville’s Wife in all but law,” Harry replied formally introducing Amber to the group.

“And Susan?” Fleur asked.

“I hope to be very soon,” Susan said with a blush.

“So, he beat you to it?” Bill asked Harry.

“We found out she’s pregnant today,” Harry said, “along with Minerva. We found out Mallory is pregnant last week.”

“How can that be?” Fleur asked. “No offense Professor, but you are not exactly young.” Hermione then explained how their bonds as concubines might well have extended their ability to bear children by years if not decades. “It might also explain why they are pregnant so soon. The rest of us, with the exception of Astoria, are trying. I think the decades they spent under the bond increased the likelihood of their conceiving once the infertility aspect of the bond was lifted.”

“It is plausible,” Mallory said. “Impossible to know for certain, however. No one seems to have bothered to study such things. Then again, the Potter Concubines almost never were placed in an infertile status for such a period of time and we all know the status of concubines in Britain and how few of them are ever allowed to conceive.”

“You think it wise to start a family in these times?” Moody asked.

“The War is in Britain, not here,” Harry replied. “Sirius told me in a letter I should live life. Even if I was still in Britain, I probably would have travelled the same path under the circumstances. If we place life on hold because of the troubles, we are conceding a defeat at the hands of our enemies. I will not concede!”

“Me neither,” Neville said and it was clear that all the “wives” were in agreement.

Harry could see Fleur whispering to Bill and he was beginning to blush, nodding as he listened.

“The next bit,” Harry went on, “I received a package this week from Ginny Weasley.” Bill looked up. “It contained cakes and pies, not unlike ‘care’ packages I received in previous summers from the Weasleys and others. The goodies were laced with an obscene dose of amorentia.”

“That bitch!” Bill said.

“What do you intend?” Moody asked.

“The use of a love potion of such strength against the Head of an Ancient and Noble House is grounds for sanctions under wizarding British law and custom.”

“Blood feud?”

“I would be within my rights to declare one,” Harry admitted. “But as I do not believe the whole family is culpable or even complicit in this plot, I hope to resolve it short of violence.”

“The Weasleys hardly have the means to pay a blood price,” Moody said. “You could wipe them out financially and they still would be subjected to more severe sanctions.”

“There is Ginny,” Bill sighed.

Harry nodded. “By custom I can take a daughter as concubine in payment of the blood price.”

“You will treat her well?” Bill asked with obvious concern in his voice.

“In time,” Harry sighed. “I’m not vindictive enough, I guess. Her treatment at first will be determined based upon her complicity in the crime.”

“We have reason to believe this was entirely the mother’s doing,” Luna said. “The method is an act of desperation, and Ginny never made a real run at Harry. She might well be an innocent pawn in this.”

“In which case,” Harry said, “she will be treated the same as my other women, with all rights and privileges they enjoy. If, on the other hand, she is guilty of this crime, she will not enjoy the same status in my House for some time. I don’t have it in me to treat her as poorly as many concubines are treated. She won’t be sent to a brothel or even shared out. I can’t do that to a woman. But, she will not enjoy the same advantages. She will be a domestic for a time. Once all my other ladies have born children and she sees what her greed cost her and I feel she has served her penance, she will be afforded a more equal status in the House. I myself hope this was all Molly’s doing and that the girl is but the pawn.”

“Will I be allowed to see her?” Bill asked.

“She always said you were her favorite brother,” Hermione noted.

Harry nodded. “Yes Bill. But I hope it will be under the best of possible circumstances given the situation.”

“I understand,” Bill sighed. “It’s more than I should expect. How do you intend to make this happen?”

“The reading of the Will of Sirius Black is scheduled for Wednesday afternoon at two,” Harry said. “I understand that the entire Weasley family will be there?”

Bill nodded.

“It will be done then,” Harry said.

“Fred and George,” Bill began.

“Yes?”

“They sent me an owl this past week. They know I’ve left the Burrow, that much is certain. They want to see me about my arrangements as they also suspect Fleur and I have moved overseas.”

“How...?”

“They know I am still with Gringotts but also know I have not set foot in Diagon Alley in days. Their shop is just across from the bank, so I suppose they’ve been watching. I also know that business is way down in the Alley since You-Know-Who became public. Something tells me that the twins shop might not open. Many of the suppliers that they are likely to use have shut up shop and others are charging outrageous prices for their supplies. I don’t know what they want, but it would not surprise me if they are looking for a more profitable opportunity.”

“Can they be trusted?” Hermione asked.

“I think so,” Bill said. “Unlike Ron and Percy, they were never tight with Mum. Never really greedy, either. They did try a few things to raise money for their shop, but that was all they wanted and when Harry financed them, well they went to work on building their business. That’s all they ever wanted to do, to be honest. In a favorable economy, they would probably have to try not to succeed. Percy, in contrast was all about grades and gaining political power. Ron strikes me as one who thinks money should grow on trees, provided he doesn’t have to care for it. He seems to think he’s owed something and should not have to earn or work for anything.”

“Fred and George never struck me as studious,” Hermione said disapprovingly.

“If one judges a person by their marks, you are right. But they’ve probably learned more magic than the top students in their year.

They're geniuses in their own right and one should not look at their performance at school as a marker."

"I always felt they were holding back," Minerva said.

"Indeed," Bill said. "They were. Three O.W.L.s each, Mum said. But she never saw what they were really up to. Between them, they got O's in Potions, Herbology, Ancient Runes, Arithmancy, Charms and Transfiguration, each focusing on three courses for O.W.L. purposes. But the truth is, they were probably N.E.W.T. levels or beyond in all of those by then. They had more important things to do – such as preparing for their shop. Their only 'failing' was in Defense, but they told me that with the exception of Professor Lupin, they never had a decent professor and they learned more from Harry last year than in their seven years at Hogwarts combined. I think they would be an asset, but that's just me."

"But for the war," Harry began. "Are you going to talk with them?"

"Before the Will reading," Bill nodded.

Harry nodded. "They can relocate here if they're interested."

"I'm sure they would be."

"Make them the offer," Harry said. "They can relocate here following the Will reading."

"To the Manor?" Dora asked.

"No," Harry said. "We can set them up in a guest house for now. I haven't seen any decent joke shops in town, so there may be a viable local market. They can always run a mail order business with Britain."

"Merlin help us," Minerva quipped.

"Thanks Harry," Bill said sincerely.

“What are your plans for the Will reading?” Kingsley asked.

“You’re going to be there?” Harry replied.

“Things are chaos within the Ministry following your adventures in the Department of Mysteries and the recent attacks,” Kingsley said. “Under normal conditions, for an estate such as the Black estate, in addition to the parties named in the Will, several other representatives are called to witness the reading. Usually, that includes the Minister for Magic, the Head of the Department of Law Enforcement, the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, where the primary beneficiary is still in school, the Headmaster, some others as well. However, because of the political chaos, recent murder of the Head of DMLE, and the fact that the next most senior person in the Department – the Head Auror – is currently being considered for the next Minister, I will be there as the DMLE rep. As Dumbledore is your Headmaster and Chief Warlock, Minerva will attend on behalf of Hogwarts School. Percy Weasley might be attending in place of the Minister. I’m just curious as to what to expect.”

Harry nodded. “The Will is going to be a bombshell. A lot of people are not going to get what they think is coming to them. I will not attend the reading itself, but shall arrive immediately afterwards to attend to business. It should be quite amusing, particularly if anyone is fool enough to object. I will attend to House Potter business as well as the principals will be there.” Harry then explained his plans in detail.

“That’s going to cause some headaches,” Moody growled.

“Payback’s a bitch,” Harry agreed. “Although, if it works it should keep the lid on things over there for a couple of years at least.”

“You’re effectively going to cripple the Death Eaters financially,” Moody agreed. “Kind of hard to fight a war when you’re broke.”

“They’ll find a way,” Harry sighed. “They’re too damned committed not to. But it’ll be a while before they can be a real threat again. By then, I hope to be ready.”

“Ready? Planning to take on the enemy yourself?”

“Lord Mayor?” Harry asked.

Remus rose. “The Duke has approved long range plans for the development of the unincorporated lands. Much will be opened to agriculture and plots have been offered to the residents of the Duchy. Construction of additional roads and rail lines to open these areas began today. In addition, on the South Coast, construction has begun on the city of Jamestown. Along the coast, we are going to build several resort hotels, hoping to open a tourist trade with the rest of the magical world, excluding Britain for now. There will also be several manufacturing plants, providing us with the ability to even the trade in that sector rather than rely primarily on our agricultural production.”

“You need people to run those things, unless you’re talking elves,” Moody said.

Remus nodded. “By September, we should have flats and retail space available for immediate occupancy in the city. We will then begin an evacuation of Muggle Borns from Britain itself. Such evacuation will be voluntary, of course, but given the state of things in Britain right now, we expect most to volunteer.”

“Just the Muggle Borns?”

“Others who are trustworthy as well,” Harry said. “But the Muggle Borns are at greatest risk.”

“And the Ministry will sit idly by as you drain its tax base? Surely they’ll note the applications for portkeys or international Floo. Even if you were to circumvent their regulations, they will detect the magic.”

“We will not evacuate by magical means,” Harry said. “The people will travel here on Muggle conveyances.”

“What are they going to do? Swim?” Moody asked sarcastically.

“We know this place can be reached by designated aircraft,” Lupin replied. “It’s how the Queen and Royal Family arrive for holiday and there was an RAF base here during the Muggle’s Second World War. Basically, we are going to build and run our own airline.”

“Build?” Hermione asked. “Planes are not easy to build.”

“Poor choice of words. We will buy the planes. In case you’re wondering, we do have a fair few pilots in this country and the means to get them up to speed with a new aircraft. We intend to provide the Muggle Borns and their families with Muggle transport from where they live to Heathrow in London, and then fly them on our planes from there to here.”

“And where will they land?” Hermione asked.

“We currently have three active airfields on the island,” Remus said. “RAF Pottersport is one, it can handle such flights, but it primarily exists to maintain and fly the Duke’s collection of vintage aircraft. His Grandfather was a bit of a collector. There is an airfield on the South Farm, but it is reserved for Her Majesty’s use. Finally, there is an airport outside the Port of Darby. It was also an RAF base, but is now used for charter flights to and from Britain and the Continent. However, while we could use that facility, we are building a new airport outside of what will be Jamestown. As that is where most of the evacuees will live, we felt a convenient and dedicated airfield was important.”

“But it takes months, even years to build all that!” Hermione protested.

“By Muggle means,” Remus grinned.

“Magic?”

Remus nodded.



“And how will this help with what’s happening in Britain?” Moody asked. “Getting out the segment of the population at risk is a good idea. Merlin knows the Ministry won’t waste its efforts protecting them, but aside from depriving Voldemort of targets, what does it do?”

“Estimates are that within the next several months one the evacuation begins, the population of the Duchy might well double,” Remus said. “We have more than enough food to sustain that and more. We’re opening new lands for agriculture not to feed our projected population, but to maintain our export markets. With a population comes manpower.”

“We intend to build an army,” Harry said. “A large one by magical standards. One with which we can take back magical Britain by force.”

“It takes years to train hit wizards,” Moody growled.

“But much less time to train a Muggle Army,” Harry said. “While it will be a magical force, it will be armed with Muggle weapons.”

“And you think the Muggles will sit idly by and let you invade?”

“Who do you think is paying for the army?” Harry said with a smirk. “I received a letter from Sir Stephen just this morning indicating there is an agreement in principal on the matter. It would seem Her Majesty’s government is very concerned with the current troubles. They have almost as much confidence as I have regarding the Ministry’s ability to resolve the situation – as in next to none. But they are also concerned about the potential long term ramifications should they intervene directly. Sir Stephen agrees a magical force of loyal subjects might be a better option.”

“Merlin’s beard! You going to give them any magical training?”

“We’re still in the early planning stages,” Remus said. “We don’t expect to begin that training on any significant scale before next year. But yes, the magicals will receive magical training. We will need field

Healers and magical sappers trained in Curse Breaking and Warding...”

“Guess I know where we fit in,” Bill said to Fleur.

“Also, the soldiers shall be trained in magical combat as well,” Remus said. “The combat training in the Aurors can be abbreviated and still provide an effective force. A lot of Auror training is unnecessary for our purposes.”

“And our armed forces will not be restricted to wizards,” Harry said. “We have not discussed age limitations – this is all in the very preliminary stages – but any resident of the Duchy can sign up without regard to magical ability. You don’t need a whit of magic to shoot a rifle and I’m told rifles can kill wizards almost as effectively as they kill Muggles.”

“As for the magical training, there’s no need for the vast majority to learn undercover work,” Dora agreed. “Most do not need any training in interrogation and all that law enforcement stuff is useless.”

“It could be done,” Moody said. “If they’re not expected to need to duel, a lot can be done in a short time. Still, it would be a year or more before you would be ready.”

“That is as anticipated,” Harry nodded. “We intend to keep the pressure on in other ways to keep that problem contained. Pity we can’t keep it contained for thirty years or so,” Harry added with a chuckle.

“Why?” Moody asked.

“Neville and I would probably have an army from our kids alone.”

“How?”

“Right now I have seven lovely ladies all chomping at the bit to bear children, although Astoria is going to wait a bit. Neville has two. By

this time next week, we will be adding twenty-five others to that list, although not all at once.”

“Bloody hell!”

“When all is said and done, I will have twenty lovelies to attend to and Neville fifteen. Today, construction began on two new wings to the Manor. One will house House Longbottom and the other will be for my expanded family.”

“These are all young women destined to be sold at Auction next week,” Remus added. “Harry is trying to corner the market and effectively destroy that vile trade.”

“By this time next year,” Harry said, “there will be no Muggle Born witches available for the market, as we hope to have relocated the remainder and their families here by then.”

“For whatever reason,” Hermione said, “there has been a ‘glut’ of witches in Britain for centuries. You cannot maintain a slave culture such as it exists without one. This should shift the demographics. Witches will no longer outnumber wizards. Right now, there are roughly two witches for every wizard. Some witches marry Muggles, taking them off the market, but those that don’t risk being sold. Perhaps as many as one witch in three is destined to that fate. Eliminate the glut, and the sales can no longer sustain themselves. New witches, if there are any, would be outrageously expensive. Harry’s plan will increase the asking price such that a witch would cost ten times what they do now. Few can afford such luxury and most of them would not bother in any case.”

“But Hogwarts has just as many wizards as witches,” Bill said.

“The other schools are not so proportionate,” Minerva commented. “And even at Hogwarts, as many as half the women wind up as Concubines by the time they are twenty-five. This year’s auction is actually an aberration, probably because of the troubles. There are only twenty-three new witches left on the ledger. Last year, over eighty were sold.”

“Disgusting,” Fleur noted.

“They don’t have concubines in France?” Hermione asked.

“Indeed we do,” Fleur said. “But where do you think most all of them come from? We do not have the glut you English do. Is it really that bad?”

“Look around,” Minerva said. “Only you, Susan, Hermione and Luna are not victims of that trade. And of that list, only you were never set to be auctioned.”

“Luna was?” Harry asked.

Minerva nodded.

“She was added to the list the day her father died,” Remus said.

“Though so,” Luna said. “Thank you Harry,” she added kissing her husband on the cheek.

“There is still the possibility that more may be added to the list between now and Monday,” Remus said sadly.

“I’m not happy about that,” Harry said. “I’ve got my hands full already, but...”

“If there is a need,” Fleur said, “we’ll help.”

“We will?”

“Harry is buying, yes?”

Harry nodded.

“Then we can help, Bill. We can give the poor dears a decent home and chance for a decent life.”

“Are you sure?” Bill asked. “I mean, I really don’t know...”

“I have nothing to fear,” Fleur said. “I will always be first in your heart.”

“The last thing I want to discuss is the Dursleys,” Harry continued.

WEDNESDAY, July 10th, 1996 – Diagon Alley, London, U.K.

Bill and Fleur stepped into Diagon Alley and by doing so into magical Britain for the first time since they left the Burrow and moved to Charenwell over a week earlier. They still worked at Gringotts London. But the Goblin bank was technically a separate country and outside of the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Magic.

Most witches did not know much about the bank. Their dealings were largely limited to deposits and withdrawals and occasional investment services. The bank was merely one of many branches of the same bank with offices throughout Europe. They were all interconnected by their own private floo service, one restricted to Gringotts employees and certain honored allies of the Goblin Nation. At this time, that list was limited to House Potter. The jobs that Bill and Fleur did for Gringotts were such that their location was not important. They could perform their duties just as readily from London, Pottersport, or even Paris or Madrid. For now, they still worked in London and could use the bank’s floo network to commute from their new home in Charenwell, although beginning tomorrow they would work out of the Pottersport branch. Because of the Will reading, they had been given the day off.

They exited the Bank and quickly crossed the Alley and were soon standing before Number 97 Diagon Alley. A sign proclaimed it as “The Future Home of Weasleys’ Wizarding Wheezes.” The windows, however, were boarded over and covered with posters of wanted Death Eaters and warnings about Dark activities. There was no indication from the outside that the shop would open anytime soon. There was a magical doorbell of sorts which Bill activated.

“We are sorry,” a female voice Bill did not recognize said, “we are not open for business at the current time. Please try back in a couple of weeks. If you are a contractor with business with the Firm, please state your name.”

“Bill and Fleur Weasley,” Bill stated.

“Just a moment,” the voice replied.

They soon heard noises not unlike that of locks being opened. The door cracked open and they saw a young woman’s face looking at them. Her position suggested she had a wand on them, but they made no move.

“What did Fred say when he first met your Consort?” she asked.

“You mean recently? He said she’s got a nice rack.”

The girl nodded.

“And what was my reply?”

“Gringotts’ accounts have been known to disappear,” a male’s voice said. “That’s them.”

The girl opened the door wide enough for them to enter. They stepped into the shop for the first time. The shelves were empty and there was no sign of any merchandise at all. A broad stair led to an upper level, which also appeared empty. They looked around at the vacant shop as they heard the door close and lock.

They turned and saw the young woman who was eyeing them warily. She was maybe Fleur’s age, with blonde hair, a petite figure and wearing what looked to be a dressing gown. It was around breakfast.

“Follow me please,” she said without introduction. She led them to the back of the vacant shop and into what would have been the storeroom. There were items here, but not many; not nearly enough to stock the shelves. She opened the door that led to a stair leading

to an upper floor. While the shop had an upper floor as well, with its own stair, this one was clearly for employees. She led them up the stairs.

They entered a fairly large room that was clearly a living area. A dining table was set up at one end and Bill could see his two younger brothers seated there along with five other young women. The brothers and two of the women were dressed, while the other three wore robes similar to that of their escort. Their escort walked to the table and took a seat near Fred.

“Good to see you Bill,” George began.

“Fleur,” Fred added.

“Have you eaten?”

“Plenty to go around.”

“Er, did I miss something?” Bill asked looking at the young women. Fleur merely stood there with her mouth open.

“Probably,” Fred said.

“Who are your guests?”

“Ah, how inconsiderate of us,” George said.

“Ladies,” Fred added, “our oldest brother Bill...”

“And his stunningly beautiful...”

“Brave...”

“And scary good Consort Fleur.”

“Beaubatons Tri-Wizard Champion.”

“Dealt with a dragon she did.”

“Didn’t do so well later,” Fleur said in a disappointed tone.

“You didn’t snuff it,” Fred said. “That’s saying a fair bit.” It was left unsaid that one of the competitors, Cedric Diggory, had not survived the tournament, although his demise was not as a result of the intended competition.

“And these young ladies?” Bill asked.

“This,” George said giving the dark skinned young woman next to him a one armed hug, “is the brilliant Quidditch Captain from last year.”

“Won us the Cup without us or Harry, she did,” Fred said.

“No mean feat,” George agreed. “She is the former, yet still stunningly lovely Angelina Johnson.” Angelina was one of the two who was dressed.

“Former?” Bill asked.

“My Wife and Consort,” George added with a smile.

“And this,” Fred said indicating the other dressed, sandy haired young woman who was clearly sitting on his lap, “is our other Chaser and totally captivating beauty, the former Alicia Spinnet, my Wife and Consort.”

“Excuse me?”

“Just following your example, Bro,” Fred said.

“You found a lovely, fell for her and bound her to you before Mum could think twice,” George added.

“Smart move,” George said.



“We certainly were inspired.”

“How’s this happen?” Bill started before realizing it was a dumb question. “When?” he added quickly, but not quick enough.

“I do believe our big brother is unaware of the interconnection between certain acts of physical intimacy and magical oaths,” Fred began.

“You see,” George said, “when a wizard meets a witch...”

“And they fall in love...”

“And get naked...”

“I know how it happens,” Bill said. “When?”

“Ah!” Fred said, “they came home on the Express and over to the shop as soon as they left the train...”

“And we were bonded by dinner.”

“Good thing too. Bonding does work up an appetite.”

“As if you need any help there,” Alicia said to Fred.

“Give the boys a break,” Angelina added. “At least they have table manners.”

“Only when we’re looking.”

“Unlike a certain Weasley we know.”

“But the bottomless stomach does seem to run in the family.”

“Merlin help us,” Bill pleaded. “Double Twin Speak!”

“Please tell me you don’t share them,” Fleur said.

“We share in all things,” Fred began.

“Except that,” George finished.

“Why so quick?” Bill asked.

“Why not?” Fred began. “Live while you can.”

“Especially these days,” George added somewhat darkly.

“It’s your own damn fault, boys,” Angelina said.

“We were going to do it this summer anyway,” George admitted.

“Just didn’t expect to that day,” Fred added. “Not that we minded.”

“Not one bit.”

“Boys,” Alicia scolded. “When they bought this shop, they got a bit of a surprise,” she explained. “It prompted Angie and me to move our plans forward for several reasons.”

“Surprise?”

The twins indicated the other four young women.

“Concubines?” Bill asked.

“You know ‘bout that?” Fred asked.

“Mum never said a thing about it, as I recall,” George added.

“She didn’t,” Bill agreed. “I’ve had a crash course in that recently. What do you mean they came with the shop?”

“Part of the deal,” George said. “Fixtures or some such. Found out the day we took possession.”

“Didn’t know what to make of it at first,” Fred said. “Not at all.”

“But we had a long talk with the gals...”

“And what they told us was...”

“Disturbing.”

“Well, if you know about concubines, then you know their usual lot in life,” Fred said.

“It would happen to these dolls if we did not take them on.”

“Couldn’t do that.”

“So we took them in.”

“And they told us,” Angelina said.

“All about it,” Alicia added. “Including the fact that Muggle Born witches tend to wind up as concubines. Angie and I are Muggle Borns and knew we could be next.”

“So we practically ran over here and did the deeds to keep from becoming...”

“And to keep an eye on these two and make sure they treat our sisters right.”

“And they have,” one of the other girls said. She had long, dark hair and smiled for the first time. “It’s almost normal.”

“That’s my Dannie,” Fred said. “Danielle Carter. She’s twenty. And this lovely,” he added indicating the girl who had met them at the door, “is Verity Smith, age twenty-one. I am their third... well, whatever.”

“We don’t like the terms ‘owner’ or ‘master,’ so...” George shrugged. “This is Shelly Parker,” he said indicating the girl with auburn hair, “she’s twenty-two and Ellen North who just turned twenty.”

“I take it you divided them between you two?” Bill said.

The twins nodded.

“How?” Fleur asked.

“Rock, paper, scissors,” George said.

“Most equitable way we could come up with,” Fred added.

“And why were they here?” Bill asked.

“This used to be a dry goods store,” Shelly said. “I was bought six years ago by the owner. He wanted a shop girl who would not talk back and, of course, that bond can do that. I was also cheaper than the other employees as he did not have to pay me anything. So long as I was fed and apparently healthy, he had no other obligations. And it helped, I guess, that I could not quit. He bought each of the others each summer thereafter replacing his normal help.”

“We also could provide profitable services he could not expect of the regular employees,” Verity added.

“Such as?” Bill asked.

“We entertained certain male customers in back,” she shrugged.

“A bordello?”

“It was a profitable side venture for our owner,” she nodded. “We never saw a knut ourselves.”

“What happened to that owner?”

“Disappeared a few months ago,” Danielle said. “Went out for something and never came back. We kept the place running until we ran out of inventory.”

“Thankfully we made enough off of his ‘other’ kind of customers to stockpile food,” Shelly said. “The goblins foreclosed the place a couple weeks before Fred and George took over.”

“Horrible!” Fleur said.

“It was not as bad as some,” Verity said. “My first Master was a right bastard. By that standard, the previous owner was almost decent to us. Still, it’s not what I wanted to do with my life.”

“All of us were good students and only of us were allowed to go beyond our O.W.L.s. You don’t need N.E.W.T.s to man a register, stock shelves or provide adult entertainments, our boss told us,” Ellen said.

“Hence, one of our problems,” George said.

“Oh?” Bill asked.

“The girls are not unknown. Their former – er – customers still come around expecting similar – er – services.”

“As we said,” Fred added, “there are certain things we do not share.”

“But we’re not letting them go and we do not want to have those kind of conversations with certain customers in a joke store!”

“Not good for business,” Fred nodded.

“Been hexing the sods for weeks,” George added. “At least the ones we know are not Death Eaters.”

“And the ones who are?”

“Told them one of the girls has the pox. They stayed away.”

“I assume your girls’ history isn’t the only problem?” Bill went on.

“We want them to be able to get past that,” Fred said. “But even if they didn’t have that, this is no place for a business.”

Diagon Alley was the largest shopping district in magical Britain. Bill knew that as well as anyone. “Oh?”

“Every day it seems another shop closes,” George said. “Our usual suppliers have either shut down or raised prices to a level we could not possible sell our things and make a profit.”

“Even if we could, there are barely any shoppers to sell anything to,” Fred said.

“We were wondering if you might have any connections so we can move to France and have a go at it,” George said.

“Why France?” Bill asked.

“That’s where you two moved to, isn’t it?”

Bill shook his head.

“But you’re not here in Britain, are you?” Fred asked.

“No, not anymore. Fleur and I are shot of this place. It’s another country.”

“Oh,” Fred said disappointed.

“So, we’re stuck here?” Angelina asked.

“I would not say that,” Fleur replied. “Bill, has not the Duke himself inquired into these two’s condition?” she added.

“He has indeed,” Bill said.

“Duke?” several voices asked.

“The ruler,” Bill said. “It’s another country and he’s the ruler of sorts. Has the advantage, well for me anyway, that they all speak English there.”

“It can’t be,” one of the girls whispered.

“You know this Duke person?” George added.

“Decent enough bloke,” Bill said. “Hasn’t been on the job all that long. He’s still getting used to it and all, but he has heard of you and is trying to attract businesses to his country.”

“What about our girls,” Fred asked. “We’ve done some checking. A lot of countries outside of Europe won’t let them in. We’d have to leave them here and that means they’d have to be sold or worse!”

“Worse?” Fleur asked.

“Former concubines of our age wind up in the bordellos anyway,” Verity sighed. “We have no skills to live in the Muggle world and in the magical we are ‘known’ as being those kind of women. We’d either wind up as bound concubines and sex toys, or the same as without the bond. Worse, if the Bond is broken, there’s a very good chance we’d lose our magic altogether. We would wind up with a very unpleasant life.”

“Or dead,” Ellen said.

“Or dead,” Verity agreed. “I want the life Fred is offering me. I think I speak for all of us in that regard. We may be bound to them, but we are not their slaves.”

“It’s probably the closest we can come to being wives,” Danielle added.

“We made that clear to the boys,” Alicia said. “We bonded with them by choice. These four had no choice. That should be the only real distinction between us. In all other ways, we expect our boys to treat our sisters the same as they treat us. Whatever we can do, so should they and that includes being mothers.”

“Our bonds do not prevent us from giving these two an earful,” Angelina added.

“There our family now, Bill,” Fred said.

“We can’t leave them behind if we go,” George added.

“And we want to leave because no one should live here.”

“Mum might think otherwise,” Bill said probing.

“That woman is dead to us,” Fred said.

“Oh?”

“We overheard a conversation between her and Dumbledore,” George said. “It was the day after we left Hogwarts.”

“Spent a total of two nights at the Burrow,” Fred said. “Then it was the Leaky Cauldron, then here. We’re not going back.”

“This conversation?” Bill asked.

“Apparently, Dumbledore’s fixing to make sure Ron gets Hermione somehow,” George said.

“We didn’t understand the whole conversation at the time,” Fred added.



“Didn’t until we met these four lovelies,” George added.

“But it unfortunately adds up.”

“Hermione’s a Muggle Born...”

“Dumbledore has the authority to sell her as a concubine...”

“Ron couldn’t get a date with a troll, much less a girl...”

“Mum can’t stand a Muggle Born who looks down her nose at ickle Ronniekins, the berk...”

“Ron wants her in all the wrong ways...”

“Dumbledore doesn’t think much of Muggle Born witches who can think for themselves...”

“But Mum can’t afford her...”

“So Dumbles is selling her to himself then giving Hermione to Ron as his toy, or some such.”

“Disgusting on so many levels,” George concluded.

“How did you hear this?” Bill asked.

“Extendable ears, mate,” Fred said.

“We thought it was Order business,” George nodded.

“And what did you do with this information?” Fleur asked.

“Didn’t put the pieces together until a day or so before term ended,” George said. “We were busy here...”

“That was before we figured our chances of opening this shop are practically nil in the current environment,” Fred added. “So we sent letters to Ron, Harry and Hermione. The letters to Harry and Hermione returned. Ron responded to ours all but boasting about how Hermione was his and to stay the fuck out of his business, his words.”

“Ickle Ronniekins is in for a rude shock,” Bill said.

“Oh?” the two asked.

“Prank of the century, courtesy of our dear, departed Marauder,” Bill continued.

“You going to leave us hanging?” Fred asked.

Bill handed Fred a newspaper. He began laughing after a couple of minutes. George grabbed it and soon was laughing as well.

Alicia picked up the paper. The photograph showed several people she knew: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Neville Longbottom and Minerva McGonagall. She recognized some of the others in the picture as Angelina peered over her shoulder.

“Monday, July 8th,” she read aloud. “The Duke and his ladies brought some new guests to their Sunday Brunch at Martha’s in Potter’s Vineyard to formally announce new additions to our community and nation. Pictured are the Duke and his wives?? Pictured are Lord Sir Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble Houses of Potter and Black, Duke of Charenwell; Lady Dame Hermione Potter, Duchess of Charenwell, Consort of Lord Potter; Lady (soon to be Dame) Luna Black (Countess of Darby Designate), Consort of Lord Black; Madam Astoria Greengrass Potter-Black; Madam Daphne Greengrass Black-Potter; Madam Dora Tonks Black-Potter; Madam Dr. Healer Mallory Grant Black-Potter and Madam Minerva McGonagall Potter-Black??; wives in all but law of His Highness the Duke with his good friend Neville Longbottom and Lady Susan Longbottom; Lord Longbottom’s wife in all but law Madam

Amber Harker Longbottom and Lord Longbottom's parents Frank and Alice. What's all this then?"

"Isn't Malfoy supposed to be the next Lord Black?" Fred asked.

"Everyone seems to believe that," George added.

"And they will learn later today they are all wrong,' Bill said. "Harry's been Lord Black since his Godfather Sirius died."

"And what's this Duke business," Fred asked. "He must bloody love that. Kid hates fame!"

"The Duke of Charenwell?" Danielle, Verity and Shelly asked in unison.

"He is indeed," Bill said. "Dumbledore is going to have fun today trying to talk down to a sovereign Head of State."

"What's this Charenwell?" George asked.

"It's where Fleur and I now live. It's Harry's homeland."

"Ours too," Verity said. "Ellen is the only Brit here. The rest of us were born there but we fell under their slave laws by attending school here. Since our parents were 'foreigners,' it seems the powers that be consider us Muggle Born in the eyes of the law. Doesn't matter that they were magicals."

"But if you returned home after terms, how could they claim you?" Bill asked.

"All three of us made the same mistake," Danielle said. "We went to a friend's house here for the summer, or at least that part of the summer when we were summoned and bound."

"We didn't think it could happen to us," Verity said. "Under our law, only the Duke or a Count may buy concubines. Only the Duke can

import them or allow them to be imported. That's because as Lord Potter he is somewhat of a duel citizen. However it's against our law for the Duke or anyone else to sell concubines once they set foot in Charenwell. Once they arrive, they become subjects and cannot be bought or sold. The man who owns them must keep them and see to them for the rest of their lives. He cannot whore them out, either for money or favors or anything. Not even the Duke can do that."

"Why such laws?" Fred asked.

"In part tradition," Verity said. "Most all of us are descended from a Potter Concubine, thus it's not illegal to be a bound concubine or for the Duke to allow you leave to enter the country as such. The House bought them to ensure heirs and for other reasons not related to adult entertainments. It was a way to bring in talent in numerous fields. Our last Duke wanted to start our own school so we would not have to send our children here for education, but he died before that could happen. There are stories of prior Dukes or Counts (those being brothers of the Duke) buying back witches who were bound here."

"That didn't happen too often," Shelly said. "We were taught that the Brits did not sell us while there was a Duke on the throne. He doesn't really have a throne, that's just an expression. But we've been without a Duke for years. No one could help us when we were caught and bound." There was real regret in her voice.

"And now we have one," Danielle said.

"How do you know this?" Angelina asked.

"We were taught all about it in primary school," Verity said. "A lot of the most revered and famous people in our history were concubines."

"Did the Duke really say something about Fred and George?" Shelly asked after a pause.

Bill nodded. "He sent me here to ask them how soon they can pull up stakes and move to Charenwell."

“Girls?” Fred said, “how soon can you get dressed?”

The four girls practically ran from the room and Bill could hear at least one of them squeal with delight: “We’re going home!”

GRINGOTTS BANK, LONDON, U.K.

It turned out the twins and their ladies had been all but packed for days and all that stopped them from leaving was knowing where to go. True, the three Charenwell girls said something about their country, but also knew that the others could not go there without leave of the Duke, so they were as stuck as the others. The twins were looking into the Americas as a place to go, among other places, and had written Bill asking for ideas and help, which prompted the visit. But they were not going to wait much longer.

Bill led the large group into Gringotts and through the Lobby, past the tellers and a small number of customers. The bank branch had seen a huge drop in business in recent weeks due to the troubles, as the Goblins called the situation in Britain. Deposits were few as it seemed the people were apt to hoard their money rather than risk going into public and possibly into a Death Eater attack. The few withdrawals were for large sums, far more than necessary for a day’s shopping, again suggesting people were keeping off the streets.

Bill’s party reached the far end of the Lobby and passed through a set of doors usually reserved for Gringotts employees. The few customers who may have paid attention would have noticed the guards stand aside without a word. They climbed a couple of flights of stair and walked down an ornate corridor to a set of doors.

“Gringotts has reserved this suite of rooms for the Duke and his guests for the day,” Bill explained as he opened the door. Beyond was a large room with plenty of chairs and couches to sit down and a large table with chairs, probably for meals. There were two beings in the room that seemed to be waiting for them. Fred and George had no idea what they were. They clearly were not Goblins or House Elves.

“High Elves,” Bill said noting the confusion. “House Elves are a corruption of them created by wizards.”

“I am Dobby,” one who was dressed in what looked like a fancy suit said, “personal Butler to the Great Harry Potter. This is Winky, Elf Maiden of his Duchess. We are to see to your needs while you are here. Please enter, friends of Harry Potter.”

“Weren’t you a House Elf once?” Fred asked.

“Indeed,” Dobby said. “Once. The Great Harry Potter broke that dark magic for us.”

“We are forever in his debt,” Winky added, “and Lady Hermione’s as well.”

“Those two keep pranking,” George said. “Look at them and what you see is not what you get.”

“Indeed we seem to pale in comparison,” Fred agreed.

They sat in silence for some minutes when the doors open and a number of people began filing in. Many of them seemed to be dressed elegantly, far more so than Fred or George had ever seen before. They recognized Harry and Hermione, but it took a while and was only when they heard the young man’s voice.

“I bloody hate those things,” Harry had exclaimed.

“Language,” Hermione scolded.

“Sorry dear,” he replied. “And it seems we have guests,” he added seeing the twins and the others. “Bit more of a party than I expected.”

Fred and George rose with Angelina and Alicia and walked over to Harry. When Harry noticed, the boys bowed low and the girls curtsied – awkwardly.

“You Highnesses,” Fred and George said with more than a little mirth in their voices.

“ Watch yourselves,” Harry warned, “Weasley Twins being respectful? Prank alert!”

“We’re wounded, Your Mightiness,” Fred said.

“Such little faith, Your Worship,” George replied.

“Cut the noise,” Harry said. “It’s Harry! Angelina? Alicia? I am pleased but confused.”

“Our Consorts,” Fred said. “Alicia,” he said taking her arm.

“And Angelina,” George said taking Angelina’s arm. “And we’ve heard you and Hermione are hitched as well. Congratulations.”

“Well, same to you,” Harry said, “and now I can tell you two apart. Assuming I know which one is with which one.”

“I’m with Fred,” Alicia said with a smile.

“Are you sure,” Hermione chided.

“Unlike most people,” Angelina replied, “we can tell them apart. Just don’t ask us how.”

“So when did this happen?” Hermione asked.

“The day we got back from Hogwarts,” Alicia said. “You two?”

“Day after,” Hermione replied.

“Great minds think alike,” Fred chuckled. As he did Luna walked in.

“Sorry,” she announced. “The Nargles. Had to use the loo.” She walked over and joined Harry and Hermione.

“You’re Luna,” Fred said.

She nodded.

“Harry’s other Consort?”

“Since Friday,” she nodded.

“The Lady Black,” Harry said proudly.

“And your other ladies?” Alicia asked. “Mind explaining them?”

“You know about them?” Harry asked.

“Bill showed us a paper.”

“You all know Minerva,” Harry said as Minerva McGonagall walked up. They nodded. “She was bound to my Great-grandfather and then my Grandfather. She passed to me when I became Head of House Potter.”

“And all this time we thought she was our formidable Head of House and Transfiguration Professor,” Fred said.

“I was,” Minerva replied, “and a spy for my Lord Potter.”

“Against who?”

“Dumbledore.”

“Makes sense. The man is not what he seems.”

“Quite the opposite,” Minerva agreed.

“Do you know what he and our ... mother ... are up to?” George asked.



Harry nodded. "Let's see? Enslaving my Hermione? Getting me soused with love potion and thrust into little Gin-Gin's amorous arms?"

"Didn't know about that bit," Fred gasped.

"They tried to do that?" George said in disbelief.

Harry nodded. "You knew about Ron?"

"We sent you letters," George said. "They all came back."

"Sorry mate," Fred said. "Short of killing the git, we couldn't think of anything else."

"Harry?" Luna asked. "They tried. That's all they could do,"

Harry had been on the verge of losing his temper. He calmed down. "This is Mallory Grant. I inherited her from Sirius along with Dora Tonks who's arriving separately with her parents."

"Do they know she's a ... a concubine?" Angelina asked.

"They were forced to sell her," Harry said. "I don't think they know who she's bound to. Bloody sick, the whole mess. These are Astoria and Daphne. The Death Eaters forced their Dad to sell them to the next Lord Black. We think the idiots thought that would be Malfoy. The git's about to learn how wrong he was. Unlike the others, I met with their father. He at least knows where his daughters are and I promised him and their mother I would take care of them and make them as happy as the situation allowed."

"And he's doing a wonderful job of keeping that promise," Astoria said with Daphne nodding emphatically in agreement.

"And we thought we had it bad," Fred said.

"Excuse me?"

“Ladies?” George called over to the other four women. “Come and meet the Duke.”

Fred and George introduced Harry and his ladies to their ladies and explained how they managed to wind up with two concubines each. They then added that three of them were born in Charenwell and were bound while they were at school in Britain.

“What? I thought it was just Clarice!”

“Who?” voices asked.

“Harry had a younger sister,” Hermione said. “Dumbledore had her adopted out, but retain magical guardianship over her probably so she could be sold off.”

“There have been others,” Verity said.

“Lord Mayor?” Harry called. He only used the title when he was pissed at something about the larger world or in formal settings, his investiture being the only of the latter to date.

“There have been incidents since the last Duke passed away,” Remus admitted.

“Incidents?”

“Dumbledore,” Remus shrugged. “He had guardianship over your sister, but he used his status as head of the Wizengamot to sell some of our other young women.”

“Not all?”

“As he was not their true magical guardian, he couldn’t,” Remus replied. “But, if they were in the country when the auction occurred and bound before they could return home...I regret there were some losses. It was highly illegal, but it seems technicalities such as the law

have not deterred the man before, or since. We think he was trying to gain some leverage over us. Without a Duke, he expected us to cave into demands or some such. We never did, but we were hard pressed to help our young women.”

“Why not?”

“As High Steward, I lacked legal authority to impose economic sanctions or declare war unless we were attacked. As such, there was little I could do until a new Duke was installed.”

“How many?” Harry growled.

“Forty-two between 1989 and 1995,” Remus said with pain in his voice.

“And this year?”

“When you executed the documents declaring House Protection for your sister, they included the eight others who were set to be sold. They are no longer up for sale.”

“And you didn’t tell me?” Harry almost yelled.

“My apologies,” Remus said. “You had just learned about your sister and concubines and were learning goodness knows what else. I felt it was not timely to spring that upon you as well. You’ve been Duke for a little over a week. Your ancestors trained their whole lives before they rose to the title. You were thrown into it blind. I did not think it prudent to mire you in details not immediately relevant to what you were learning or already dealing with.”

“He has a point, Harry,” Hermione said. “We’re all still coming to grips with this.”

The others could see Harry calming down. “Now that I do know, what can we do about it?”

“Dumbledore does not really know your sister is under Potter House protection,” Remus said. “The formal documents merely state it is the protection of the Duke of Charenwell. He has no idea the Potter family has any connection with the Duchy. All communications with your family in the past were made through properties you own in Britain. As there is a Duke, he cannot sell our women.”

“That’s all well and good, Remus, but what about the forty-two others?”

“Thirty-nine,” Verity said. “Three of us are here.”

“Unfortunately,” Remus said, “the bonds are magical. They can be transferred, but not broken. The women are bound for life in all probability. You can’t force their owners to sell them. I’m sorry.”

“So those other thirty-nine are lost to us?” Harry asked sadly.

“Unless they pop up for auction,” Remus said.

“Are any of them...”

“No Harry. I did check that when you mentioned buying the others.”

“DAMN! Why can’t I just exercise House Protection over the lot of them?”

“Harry, once they are bound they are no longer subject to a magical guardianship,” Remus said. “That’s what House Protection is. You could only use it for an unbound witch. Even then, your authority is limited. You could exercise it in favor of your sister because she’s your immediate family. You could exercise it over a witch who’s a citizen of Charenwell because you are legally and magically their ruler. But the other women? You have no legal or magical authority to pre-empt their British magical guardians.”

“There might be another option,” Daphne said.

“Oh?”

“It’s not ideal. But it will teach the bastards a lesson.”

“And this option is?”

Daphne explained her idea over the next several minutes.

“That might work,” Hermione opined. “Even if it doesn’t, the bastards will squirm.”

“Remus?” Harry asked.

“It might work.”

“Slytherin bares its teeth,” Harry said.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew’s, SP – St. Patrick’s, SD – St. David’s. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19;  
CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.1. Susan Marie (Bones)  
Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).2. Amber Selma  
(Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).

Fred Weasley, age 18 (born 4/1/78).1. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley,  
age 21 (6/6/75) (SG-5). Sold 7/19/91; sold to Hardin Gracial (Diagon  
Alley) 7/12/94; CONCUBINE OF FRED WEASLEY 6/3/96.2. Danielle  
Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (1/19/76) (SG-5). Sold 7/17/92; sold  
to Hardin Gracial (Diagon Alley) 7/13/95; CONCUBINE OF FRED  
WEASLEY 6/3/96.3. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (10/10/77) (Gr).  
CONSORT OF FRED WEASLEY 6/22/96.

George Weasley, age 18 (born 4/1/78).1. Shelly Ann (Parker)  
Weasley, age 22 (6/21/74) (SD). Sold to Hardin Gracial 7/17/90;  
CONCUBINE OF GEORGE WEASLEY 6/3/96.2. Ellen Suzanne  
(North) Weasley, age 20 (2/11/76) (PE). Sold to Hardin Gracial  
7/15/92; CONCUBINE OF GEORGE WEASLEY 6/3/96.3. Angelina  
Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (12/21/77) (Gr). CONSORT OF  
GEORGE WEASLEY 6/22/96.

## CHAPTER THIRTY: THE READING OF THE WILL

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10th, 1996 – GRINGOTTS BANK, LONDON, U.K.

Narcissa Malfoy was the wife of Lucius Malfoy, a marked Death Eater captured at the Battle in the Department of Mysteries about a month earlier. The man had been tried, convicted and was now serving a twenty year sentence for his crimes, or at least the ones associated with his failed raid. The man was cold and probably had committed more than enough rapes and murders as a Death Eater to justify the re-imposition of the Death Sentence, but the Ministry saw fit not to look too far back into the man's dark past.

Narcissa was the youngest daughter of Cygnus Black and Druella Rosier, a junior line within the Ancient and Noble House of Black. They were about as dark as a witch and wizard could be without sinking into criminal activities and were dyed-in-the-wool Pureblood Supremacists. As such, they believed the wife's role was to give birth to a son they had kept having daughters until Druella had one miscarriage too many and died. Narcissa was three when that happened. She had no memories of her mother and for all practical purposes only knew her father by sight. She was raised by governesses, as were her older sisters before her.

Her oldest sister was named Bellatrix and was ten years older than she was. She barely knew the woman at all. By the time Narcissa was old enough to have memories Bella was at Hogwarts and soon had finished to be promptly married off to Rodolphus Lestranger, another Pureblood Supremacist. Like most Pureblood elites, it was an arranged marriage worked out between the families years before. They were among the first of their generation to follow the Dark Lord and take the mark as Death Eaters. Both had been arrested shortly after the Dark Lord's fall and, unlike men like Lucius who bribed their way out of a trial, proudly proclaimed their devotion to the Dark Lord. Until about a year ago, they had been serving life terms in Azkaban Prison. Their "friends" had released them "on their own recognizance" in what was the largest prison break in history. Rodolphus had been recaptured following the fiasco at the Department of Mysteries.

Bellatrix had escaped. Narcissa's father had always been proud of Bellatrix.

Andromeda was the next of her sisters. She was three years younger than Bellatrix and had been little Narcissa's first friend. Narcissa's fondest memories were of her times with "Andy" as a little girl. Andy had started Hogwarts just about the time Narcissa was four years old, but she always wrote funny letters, seemingly every week and came home and played with her over the holidays. Andy told the most wonderful stories about princesses and such that made Narcissa believe in a happy life.

In the summer of 1972, Narcissa's perfect world came crashing down. Bellatrix was a Death Eater, but she had almost no contact with her youngest sister and Narcissa had no real idea what that was. In that summer, Andy went away and never came home again. She also never wrote to Cissy again. Narcissa was nine and her father was not one to speak to children about anything. Her governess was cryptic, saying only that Andy had run off with a boy and would never be coming home. It was not until years later that Narcissa learned the truth.

Andy had been pledged in marriage to Lucius Malfoy, a lad from the "right kind" of family. But in the summer before her final year at Hogwarts, Andy became the Wife and Consort of a Muggle Born wizard named Ted Tonks. She had promptly been disowned by her father and it was said that Bellatrix had a contract out on both of their lives, assuming the evil witch did not get to them first. With the contract between House Malfoy and her father broken by what the "right kind" of families viewed as an outright betrayal of their ideals, Narcissa's father promised her to Lucius's family.

Narcissa knew this before she left for Hogwarts the first time on September 1st, 1974. She had two cousins at the school at the time. Sirius Black, the Heir of the Ancient and Noble House of Black was then a Fourth Year, but he was selected into Gryffindor House, which was not a House for those from the "right kind" of families. His younger brother was a Third Year in Slytherin. She entered, already betrothed to marry a man she knew only by name, and was sorted into Slytherin as all proper "Pureblood Princesses" should have been.



What she saw in that House disgusted her. They were supposed to be the elites of society, the models of what it meant to be a witch or wizard. The boys were animals, in her opinion. Her first day, a third year girl was gang raped in the middle of the Common Room. There were apparently three kinds of girls in her House. There were the girls who basically spent their time in the common rooms mostly naked and having sex with any boy who asked. There were the girls like her who were betrothed and off limits to all but her husband-to-be. Then there were the girls who were neither. They got "broken in" by the boys, usually by the end of Third Year. She came to realize that if Slytherin was the model of society, witches were only marginally better than Muggles. Their role was to do whatever the wizards who controlled them wanted of them, if the Common Room was any example.

Like most girls, she wanted love and romance. She soon learned those notions were fictions. The best she could hope for was to get married young, give birth to an heir, and then be ignored except when the husband needed to socialize with the right sort of people. This was not the life she wanted, but she could see no way out, not during a war where those who objected to the proper way of things were being killed on a daily basis by those Death Eaters. She already knew her betrothed was one and knew it was her death to follow in Andy's footsteps. She resigned herself to her fate ... mostly.

She became friends with her Cousin Sirius. He was not like the others. There was a reason why he was not sent into the dungeons of Slytherin House. While he was a prankster, he had something she did not see in any other boys she knew. He was compassionate. He was decent, at least to her. It was a pity she was his First Cousin. Even in Pureblood society, having relations with him was out of the question. But he was a friend.

She took her O.W.L.s in 1979 and learned when she got home she was to be married off to Lucius that summer. He had waited five years for a proper wife and felt that was long enough and being a high ranking Death Eater meant her father was not about to say "wait." It meant her days in school were at an end. She would never sit for her N.E.W.T.s. That's what House Elves were for, she was told.

She did not want this. She wanted to stay in school. But her father had spoken and Lucius, a man she did not even know, much less like, was waiting. She spoke to Sirius about it. She knew there was nothing he could do. He promised her if by some miracle he became Head of House, he would annul the marriage as was his right. But it would take a miracle.

Specifically, she could only be saved by the death of his father and then brother. He had been disowned by his father because he opposed the “right kind of people.” His brother was a Death Eater, which was what all right thinking Purebloods should aspire to be. But, disowning was not what many think. It meant that the line would pass to the brother, but if the brother died without an heir and without designating a successor, Sirius would be reinstated by law. It was too much to hope for, Narcissa knew, but it still meant something to her that Sirius made a promise they knew he probably would not be able to keep. Still, the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black had not upheld the disowning of his grandson Sirius. This meant that unless one of the other two put it in their will, Sirius still could become Head of House.

She married Lucius in August 1979. She was sixteen. He was seven years older than she was. He was also cold and distant and only took her to his bed out of a sense of family obligation. There clearly never would be any love between them. Her role was to bear his heir. For pleasure, he turned to his stable of concubines, all young and all Muggle Borns. He had three. She later learned he bought them as young as he could, kept them as his private brothel for three years, then sold them off.

In February 1979, Orion Black, Sirius’s father, was killed in a Death Eater attack in Diagon Alley. He was an “innocent” bystander and it was said that the Dark Lord executed a few of his followers for their carelessness, which was odd as such mayhem was usually expected of Death Eaters. Regulus Black disappeared in July of that year and was never seen again. He was declared dead a year later. The younger Black died without a Will, meaning unless Arcturus Black disowned his Grandson and designated another heir, Sirius would be the next Lord Black.

Narcissa found out she was pregnant in the fall of that year. When she told her “husband” – a word always in quotes in her mind – he smirked. When she gave birth to their son Draco in June of 1980, he never touched her again. She had obviously fulfilled her purpose as far as he was concerned.

To her dismay, her friend and potential savior Sirius was sent to Azkaban for murder in November of 1981. He was said to have betrayed the Potter family to Voldemort and murdered another wizard and a bunch of Muggles. As it was that Potter boy who somehow destroyed the Dark Lord, bringing an end to that War and the downfall of the Death Eaters, a fate Lucius avoided at immense cost, being linked to the death of the boy’s family was just below being the dead Dark Lord himself in the eyes of the public. Her friend would never see the light of day.

In May of 1991, Lord Black died. He had not designated a successor in his will, enraging Lucius who thought he had brokered a deal with the man to name Draco the next Lord Black. But that had not happened, and the small fortune in gold Lucius spent to have Draco declared the Heir was wasted. There was no legal basis for doing so. Draco’s would only be the Heir if Sirius died and he was not challenged by another with an equal degree of kinship to Arcturus Black. There was potential challenger out there and Lucius knew it: Harry Potter. Draco was Sirius Black’s First Cousin once removed, but he was the same degree of kinship removed from Arcturus Black as the Potter boy. The plan had been that Draco would befriend the boy at Hogwarts and then trick him out of making a claim. Narcissa had no faith in her son. He was spoiled, lazy and not terribly bright. He would never be an equal to his father in anything except appearance. To Lucius’s horror, Draco made an enemy of Potter right from the start.

Wizarding law was bizarre, yet designed to protect birthrights. Sirius was in prison for life, and as a prisoner he could not make out a Will. But his imprisonment would not invalidate a Will that already existed. Moreover, there was no law that said an escaped prisoner could not make out a Will, mainly because no one had escaped from Azkaban before. In July of 1993, somehow Sirius did just that. Had he made a Will? Narcissa hoped he did. She hoped he remembered his promise

to her and he could annul her marriage (provided, she learned, that the next Lord Black honored the request.) He had been killed in the Battle at the Department of Mysteries barely a month ago, still a fugitive from justice. Had he made a Will? It turned out he had! Less than a week later, she received notice that she was named in the Will! Had he rescued her at last seemingly from beyond the grave? Her hopes were again dashed when she learned Draco had received a similar notice and assumed it meant he was the next Lord Black. As their notices did not tell them anything about whomever else may have received a bequest, it was a logical and for Narcissa horrifying conclusion.

Draco was betrothed to Pansy Parkinson, a girl in his year and House at Hogwarts from another Death Eater family. Narcissa knew the girl on sight, but had never really met her. Children were not allowed to attend proper social functions until they were sixteen. That would be this summer for Draco and his betrothed. With his father in prison and the belief that he was soon to be Lord Black, Draco made it clear he was now acting Head of Household, which technically and unfortunately was true. As the acting household, he had the right to demand his betrothed live with him, especially as everyone knew he would be emancipated upon his becoming Lord Black. Pansy was allowed a week to say goodbye to her family, while Draco bragged about his "other plans" for the summer.

Once he became Lord Black, he would have the right to buy concubines. He did not want his father's "leavings" so intended to purchase his own "stable." There was another girl in his House and year who he felt need a good breaking, but who had managed to avoid it. As a concubine, she could no more avoid that than breathing, he boasted. He worked around the little problem that until he was Lord Black, he could not legally enter into a contract to purchase a concubine. Narcissa had to admit it was clever. He somehow coerced the girl's father to sell her and her younger sister to the next Lord Black, with the sale to be completed not later than July 15th. That was the day of the general Auction and he did not to have to bid for those two "bints." He was also planning on buying an "uppity Mudblood," provided he could "get her cheap" as she was due to be auctioned as well. Like father, like son, Narcissa thought. Then Pansy arrived.

And Vincent Crabbe. And Gregory Goyle.

There was little point in Pansy wearing clothes in the house. At least one of the three boys was copulating with her all the time, it seemed. She did not seem to mind whether it was any one of them, or two, or all three, nor where. She performed sex acts with them during meals, which Narcissa could not avoid. It seemed there was no orifice that was off limits to them or time when they could not take her, or place for that matter. Given the choice between Lucius, who had not touched her in over a decade, and her son, Narcissa would rather be with Lucius, who at least had some sense of propriety. She told Draco what she thought of his and his friend's activities a few days ago. That was a mistake. Draco said his mother needed "a more enlightened attitude about some things." The boys then raped her as Pansy cheered them on. From then on, the boys took turns with both women. They even used the Imperious Curse on her to get her to perform certain acts she could not be forced to do – namely oral sex with all four of the teens including Draco's slag of a betrothed. Sirius save me, she begged in her mind.

Draco knew what he was doing. Narcissa took her seat in the conference room at Gringotts in considerable pain, as she had been beaten as well. But there was not one mark that would be visible to the public. Her occlumency skills were in full force as she steeled herself. Her life was over and her demon spawn of a son was about to become even more insufferable. She wished she had smothered the bastard when he was a baby!

Draco even had the nerve to sit beside her at the table. The smug bastard was gloating, with his three friends in the gallery behind sniggering as others entered the room.

"What are you doing here Malfoy?" a voice called. Narcissa saw a tall, red haired boy about Draco's age glaring at his son as if he wanted to kill. A part of her hoped the boy would, but they all had to surrender their wands in the Lobby. It was custom.

"Sitting, Weaslebee," Draco sneered.

Ron Weasley shrugged. He had heard the rumors, although he still found it hard to believe Sirius Black had made Malfoy the next Lord Black and heir. One thing was certain, Ron would not be it. Oddly, he did not mind. He was one of the invited guests which meant he was getting something; probably just money and even then probably not a fortune. That would come later, according to Dumbledore. But a thousand Galleons or two would be very nice, especially now.

Years ago, before he even started Hogwarts, Dumbledore had made a promise to him. It wasn't very specific. He was to become friends with a boy named Harry Potter and help the lad lead a normal life. Dumbledore was afraid the boy would be all into books and learning, seeing as he was not raised in their world. If Ron were to succeed, he would be rewarded greatly. For years he wondered what it could mean. Then, just before the Christmas holidays, Ron was asked to see the Headmaster and the Headmaster asked him what he could do for the boy this summer. It was part of the reward. Ron was given until the end of the Holidays to think about it. One should not make a rash decision, after all, Dumbledore had told him.

Money would be nice, he thought. But Dumbledore was hinting about the here and now. Let's face it, so long as he was at Hogwarts, money would be nice, but of little use to him. There was not a whole lot of fancy things to buy in Hogsmeade and even if there were, there was not much he could do with them at school or home for that matter.

But he did have an idea, the seeds of which were planted his First Year even if then he had no notion. In the Fall of that year, he had ducked into an "empty" class room to hide from Filch or Snape or some such except the classroom was not empty. There were two older students, a boy and a girl, both naked and the girl was begging "Master" to do all kinds of things to her. The boy was doing just that. It was dark, but Ron soon learned who they were. It was his brother Percy and a Prefect from Ravenclaw named Penelope Clearwater.

Percy saw him. Ron was sure he was going to get into loads of trouble for being out of the dorms after curfew, but it wasn't like that. Percy merely explained what was going on while the Clearwater girl

sat there naked, not even trying to cover herself up. Percy had won a lot of money his first five years at Hogwarts in card games. This summer he spent it. "Penny" was a bossy, know it all girl who Percy fancied a bit but who felt Percy was too insignificant to notice. Percy had learned the girl was to be sold as a Concubine that summer and had found someone to buy the girl for him. She was now bound to him, to serve him, please him and do whatever he asked without complaint or question. She was his shag, and she was doing his homework for him. To prove that she was totally his to control, he said she would let Ron touch her if he wanted. Ron was eleven, and ran from the room.

Ron learned the girl was pleasing her Master every day, even during the Hols. Percy spent the next two summers in his room most of the time. It turned out, he was not alone. Penny was there for his recreation. Ron found this out the summer before his third year. Percy had caught the boy pleasuring himself in his room and Ron was sure Mum would learn and he would be in all kinds of trouble. But that's not what Percy did. Percy lent him Penny to ease his frustrations. It did not make Ron any more comfortable with "real" girls, but it was easy to get comfortable with a girl who would do whatever you wanted. He wanted that.

And now, he was about to get that. After Christmas, he told Dumbledore what he wanted. He wanted Hermione Granger. He wanted her as his concubine. He wanted Dumbledore to see to it that it happened. To his surprise, Dumbledore smiled and said "Excellent my boy! That I can do. And here I was afraid you might wish for me to insure that your Chuddley Canons win the League!"

Granger would be his slave in less than a week! The bossy, no fun know-it-all would be pliant and submissive. It would be hard for her to boss him around with his dick in her. He was going to shag her 'til he dropped. And when he was not shagging her, she would be his slave. She was smart, so she obviously should do his homework for him for once. Pity, she could not take the exams for him. Then he received the letter that he was to get something from Sirius! He had heard about the Shag Shacks in Hogsmeade where some boys had been known to keep their concubines. Hermione had her O.W.L.s. She didn't need N.E.W.T.s to suck Ron off. She knew how to make

polyjuice potion! The bint could live in the shack, serve his needs while he was there, do his homework while he was not, and make the potion to take his place during exams! This year was going to be great! Harry might miss her, he thought, but there were plenty of pretty girls who would love to have him. Besides, he knew in the end he was going to be with Ginny. Her Mum was already working on that.

Over the next several minutes, more people entered the room. Some took seats at the table, while others sat in the gallery. This was the reading of the Will of the Head of an Ancient and Noble House. Such things drew attention and were almost always public affairs. There was one seat at the head of the table and three at the far end. Anyone who tried to sit in those seats was “politely” discouraged by sword point.

The doors closed and a Goblin walked to the head of the table, taking his seat in the lone chair.

“This being the 10th Day of July, 1996 by Wizarding record and the 7th Day of Krunan, in the 3756th Year by Gobin recording, at Gringotts Bank, London Branch, I, Accounts Manager Slasher, presiding for the Reading of the Last Will and Testament of Lord Sirius Orion Black, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, deceased. This being the Will of a Noble House and one in which a Minor is to be named and principal heir, I now ask if the representatives of the Wizarding People of Britain are present?”

“Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, present on behalf of the People,” Dumbledore said. He smiled. When this day was over, he would have unfettered access to two of the largest fortunes in magical Britain.

“Kingsley Shacklebolt, on behalf of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Ministry of Magic.”

“Percival Weasley, on behalf of the Office of the Minister for Magic.”

“Minerva McGonagall, Deputy Headmistress, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.”



“The government being present, I shall now call for those named in the Will. Lest there be any question, their presence here today is not necessary for them to receive their bequests: Hermione Jane Granger?”

There was no reply, but before any could react, the Goblin continued: “Mallory Michelle Grant?”

“Present,” a woman few had seen before said.

And so it continued as the Gobin called the names of: Remus Lupin, Draco Malfoy, Narcissa Malfoy, Andromeda Tonks, Nymphadora Tonks, Arthur Weasley, Fred Weasley, George Weasley, Ginevra Weasley, Molly Weasley, Ronald Weasley, and William Weasley. Only two others were absent: Bellatrix Lestrange and Harry Potter.

The will was then read.

To say there was pandemonium at the table when Slasher finished would be an understatement. Draco was furious, as was Ron Weasley and his mother. Others seemed stunned into silence, although a few seemed rather unsurprised. Ron and Draco were yelling at each other, at least whenever Draco was not crying that the Will had to be a fake as he was destined to be Lord Black. Finally a loud voice called for silence. It was Dumbledore.

Inwardly the man was smiling. By making Harry Lord Black, the witless convict had just handed Albus the keys to the vaults. He had skimmed well over a million from the Potters over the years. As the boy’s magical guardian, he now held the same control over another fortune. The lad would never learn of his inheritance. He would extract an oath of secrecy from all present for “the Greater Good.”

“I am sure all is in order,” Albus said. “Certain of the specific bequests seem – odd – but those that would disown or reinstate or otherwise affect family relations are merely requests and cannot be granted by a minor. As Harry’s magical guardian, I shall not consent to his emancipation at this time, thus all non-monetary bequests are

in abeyance. I am sure that if and when the lad comes of age, he will see the folly.”

While his speech ended the tirades, some seemed ready to continue once he stopped, but any thoughts of doing so were put to an end when three loud cracks were heard.

“ALL RISE!” a voice called out. Heads turned and saw a Goblin in full war regalia standing beside a door behind the three empty chairs that slowly opened. “ALL RISE FOR HIS HIGHNESS HARRY THE FIRST, SOVEREIGN AND DUKE OF THE DUCHY OF CHARENWELL; LORD SIR HARRY JAMES POTTER, HEAD OF THE ANCIENT AND NOBLE HOUSE OF POTTER, HEAD OF THE ANCIENT AND NOBLE HOUSE OF BLACK!

“HER HIGHNESS,” the Voice continued, “THE LADY DAME HERMINE JANE POTTER, DUCHESS OF CHARENWELL, CONSORT OF LORD POTTER! HER GRACE, THE LADY DAME LUNA MARIE BLACK, COUNTESS OF DARBY, CONSORT OF LORD BLACK!”

Three people entered. One was recognized by all. He was dressed in a deep blue uniform with gold trim and gold shoulder boards. A large, gold and silver starburst pin was on his left side and a sash of color ran from his right shoulder to his left hip. At his left hip hung a sword in a scabbard. His head was bare, and all could see it was Harry Potter. Beside him on his right was a blonde haired young woman with a bemused smile in a light blue gown with jewels of diamond and deep blue sapphires around her neck and wrists and a ring that seemed to flash as she moved on her left ring finger. To Harry’s left was a brown haired young woman with a serious expression. She wore a deep blue gown and similarly stunning jewels. She also wore a starburst pin just like the young man and a similar sash. They took the three seats at the end of the table and two more young women, at least as coifed and bejeweled as the others in elegant blue on white gowns, took up positions to the left and the right of the trio. It took some time for those who knew them to recognize them. The young woman in the light blue gown was Luna Lovegood, and to her right

stood Daphne Greengrass. The other young woman was Hermione Granger, and to her left stood Astoria Greengrass.

“Harry, I do not think you need to be here. Let me handle this,” Dumbledore said in his familiar grandfatherly voice that had always worked on Harry in the past.

“You have handled far too much, Old Man,” Harry sneered.

“I must insist that you return to the Dursleys and allow adults to handle these things.”

“I have not been to the Dursleys,” Harry said. Technically, it was a lie. He was there for a few hours, but so far as what Dumbledore was on about, it was the truth. “My countrymen returned me to my true home when I got back to London. I will never return.”

“It is for your protection...”

“PROTECTION? That’s a joke. What kind of compulsion charm did you use on my parents to get them to hide in your home in Godric’s Hollow?”

Dumbledore’s mind skills failed just momentarily. It was obvious that was exactly how his father and mother had been convinced not to return to Charenwell. “So it was a compulsion charm. Finally some answers! Your ‘Greater Good’ as good as killed my parents, Old Man! Merlin knows how many others have died needlessly to further your aims! I would have been safe in Charenwell and I am safe there. You cannot find me, no one can! Without my permission, were you to come close, you would die at the ward lines. Even with my permission, if you harbored any threat or ill will to me or my people, you would die at the ward lines! Voldemort and his Death Eaters will die if they try and cross our wards. No exceptions, no mercy and no quarter! And yet you brought my parents out and left them to die in this vile land when it was unnecessary! Voldemort is more trustworthy than you if only because everyone knows his loathsome agenda! Do not speak to me again, fool, unless I ask you to!”

“Harry, I insist...”

“SILENCE!” a voice boomed. “YOU WILL NOT ADDRESS HIS SOVEREIGN HIGHNESS UNLESS ASKED A DIRECT QUESTION! ANY WHO SHALL VIOLATE SUCH CONDITIONS WILL BE FORCIBLY REMOVED!” As the voice died, twenty armed Goblins entered the room with swords drawn.

“My Friends of the Goblin Nation have kindly allowed us The Goblins Peace on Neutral Ground. Any who so breach the peace, do so on pain of death,” Harry intoned. Fortunately, none were fool enough to test this theory.

“The Will has been probated,” Harry said. “Pursuant to addendums, which need not be part of the record, Sirius Black, my magical guardian under the Will of James and Lily Potter, granted me emancipation so that I might accede to my rightful titles and properties...”

“But that’s,” Dumbledore began.

“Silence Human,” A voice growled, “or lose your head!”

“The Goblins are quite serious about being forcible for interruptions,” Harry began. “And as I understand it, they do not see a large distinction between talking out of turn and breach of the Goblin Peace. I suggest you remain silent.”

Dumbledore glared at the boy, who avoided eye contact.

“I am here to take care of certain matters that arose during my review of my estate affairs over the past couple of weeks. First, I shall deal with the affairs of the Black Estate. In regards to Andromeda Tonks nee Black, the disenfranchisement issued by Cygnus Black, having never been upheld by the Head of House, is hereby rescinded. You are restored to the House, with all rights and privileges thereto pertaining forthwith and such rights extend to all descendents.” As he said that, Harry signed a parchment Daphne had laid before him and

then sealed it with one of his rings. Upon sealing, there was a flash of magic.

“Thank you, your highness,” Andy said with tears in her eyes. Before a Goblin could move, Harry raised his hand and they remained motionless.

“The damnable blood bigotry that cost you, Andromeda, is destroying this culture. It will not be tolerated in my family. Moving on and in a similar vein, Bellatrix LeStrange nee Black, being the most vile and loathsome of blood bigots, is cursed, disowned and disenfranchised from the House of Black. May she die a most hideous death!” Another parchment was signed and sealed.

“Draco Malfoy,” Harry continued, “being the most vile of blood bigots of his generation, has repeatedly proven that by drawing breath he is a bane to the family. He is hereby cursed, disowned and disenfranchised from the House of Black!”

“I’ll do you for that Potter!” Draco said. Three Goblins pulled him from his chair and beat the screaming boy senseless, dragging his unconscious form from the room before a silent hall. He would spend three weeks in St. Mungo’s recovering from the beating. Harry merely shrugged as he signed and sealed another document.

“Next,” he nodded to Daphne who carried another document to Slasher at the far end of the table, “before you, Accounts Manager, is a list of thirty-four properties subject to a lease. All thirty-four are at least ten years or more in arrears. I declare them in default. The tenants are to be evicted and the properties warded against any trespass. The accounts shall be confiscated to pay for the arrearages and penalties and interest under the leases. Should they have insufficient funds to cover such arrearages, all other property to which they hold title shall be confiscated and sold. If they are still in arrears, they are to be subject to the penalties under Goblin law.”

“As you wish, Your Highness,” Slasher said with a menacing grin.

“What’s that mean?” a voice called out.

“It means,” Slasher said as he kept his guard in check, “that they shall be deemed as thieves. Goblins shall not suffer a thief to live.”

“The penalty shall only apply to the signer of the lease or his heir in possession should the signer be dead already,” Harry added. “As the Goblins were the sureties under all the leases, the penalties for default, including the possibility of Goblin justice, were spelled out in the lease. It would seem my predecessors did not trust their tenants.”

The boy has no idea what he is doing, Dumbledore seethed but with a sword at his back could say nothing. He’s ruining Voldemort’s principal financiers! He’s inviting massive Death Eater retaliation!

Daphne had returned to her pace. Harry looked at Narcissa. “Narcissa Malfoy nee Black?” he asked.

“Y-yes, milord?” she replied. She hoped and yet feared what might happen next.

“A long time ago, my Godfather Sirius made you a promise, one he was unable to fulfill in his lifetime. I find myself having to do the man’s work for him these days. If you wish it, I will fulfill his promise.”

It took all of her willpower not to break down in tears. “Y-y-yes. I wish it. And I-I-I w-wish for the p-p-protection of y-y-your h-house a-as v-vassal?”

“What’s that mean?” Harry whispered to Daphne.

“More than legal protection,” Daphne said, “she wants physical protection. To live under your roof or such.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “That’s unexpected,” he said softly. “I suppose once in for a knut, in for a galleon.” He looked at Narcissa. “Granted!” he said aloud. “The marriage between Lucius Malfoy and Narcissa Black is hereby annulled! House Black shall waive the Bride Price.”

“Why?” Daphne whispered.

“They don’t have it,” Harry said. “They can’t even pay the arrearages. Draco, unfortunately, will live. The Goblins won’t kill a minor. Lucius had better hope he stays in Azkaban.” Harry signed and sealed another form and following a flash of magic, Narcissa lost her composure and wept openly. Few knew they were tears of joy and relief.

“Daphne?” Harry asked, “would you please escort Miss Black to our antechamber and return when you can?”

“Yes Harry,” Daphne said. Something told her Harry would stall to give her a chance to return for the rest of the show. She got up and walked over to Narcissa helping the crying woman to her feet and allowing her to cling to her as she walked her from the room.

“Slasher?” Harry asked, “would it be possible for one of my Elves to bring a pitcher of water?”

“We are at your service,” Slasher nodded.

“Thank you. Well that was amusing,” Harry said turning to Hermione.

“It sure was,” she replied.

Harry then looked around the room. Not surprisingly all eyes were on him. But it was the expressions on certain faces he was observing. Ron and his mother were beet red and seething, with Molly glaring at Dumbledore as if silently pleading with the man to do something. To Harry’s surprise, Ginny simply looked curious. Perhaps she did not know. Dumbledore was clearly doing his best to avoid getting run through by a Goblin blade.

Dobby soon entered with a pitcher of water and five glasses. As he left, Daphne returned. “Harry?” she asked, “there’s something wrong with her.”

“It’s been a trying day,” Harry began.

“NO! REALLY WRONG! I think she’s hurt.”

Harry glanced over to Mallory who nodded and got up, leaving the conference room.

“Right then,” Harry pressed on. “I have reviewed the audit conducted by Gringotts in regards to my Potter estate accounts during the tenure of my former guardian Albus Dumbledore. It seems there is a significant discrepancy. Would you care to explain, Headmaster?”

“I can assure you Harry, the expenditures went towards your care and upkeep.”

“ONE POINT SEVEN MILLION GALLEONS! DO YOU REALLY THINK I’M THAT DUMB!?”

“Harry, do you really need to be concerned with such mundane...”

“WHAT THE FUCK DID YOU DO WITH MY FAMILY’S MONEY?”

“Well,” Albus hesitated, “I was to see that you were provided for.”

“The Dursleys spent no more than seventy-five pounds per month providing for me, and even then that was a generous month!”

“They demanded compensation...”

“Which they were not entitled to under my parents’ Will! That is assuming I was meant to go to them in the first place! According to that Will, I was never to be placed with them!”

“There were other considerations!”

“None of which I or Gringotts finds legally valid! You have thirty days to repay the full amounts or your accounts will suffer the same fate as



the Black tenants. And I am doing you a favor! I won't expect interest!"

"Harry, this could break the Order!"

"You should have thought of that, Old Man, BEFORE YOU ROBBED ME BLIND!"

"You need to see reason, Mr. Potter," Dumbledore began.

"Another word and you can run his ass through," Harry said to the Goblins. Dumbledore shut his mouth cursing the fact he had no wand. But that was okay. The boy had to leave the Bank, and when he did he would meet with the Elder Wand.

"Next order of business," Harry continued. "Percy, you speak on behalf of your government?"

"It's your government too, Potter!" Percy shot back. Much has he loved the hole Dumbledore and fallen into, Percy still hated the Boy-Who-Lived-And-Mocked-The-Ministry.

"You clearly were nicking notes to get through school," Harry snarled. "What part of the word Sovereign did you not understand? I am the Head of a Foreign State! I am no more a citizen of this country than is the Emperor of Japan! Now be a good little boot-licking lackey, and write this down for your superiors!"

"It has come to OUR attention that during the Stewardship preceding OUR investiture as Duke of Charenwell, OUR citizens have suffered at the hands or upon the orders of officials of The Ministry of Magic of Britain and the Wizengamot. Specifically, from the death of Duke Charles until OUR investiture, forty-two young women of Charenwell citizenship, while residing in your country for education or visiting on Holiday, were illegally sold into bondage on the authority of your Chief Warlock. By what right do you claim you have the authority to sell our young women off as concubines for your county's perverse entertainments?"

“What the hell are you talking about?” Percy sputtered.

“Come off of it! You own your own personal sex slave yourself! Or at least you did until you placed Penelope Clearwater up for auction.”

“How...?” Percy began.

“Forty-two young women sold to satisfy the perverse desires of dirty old men, all of those women being under age! Now, I understand the nature of the bond that makes a woman a Concubine. It cannot be broken, only transferred from one pervert to another! At least that seems to be the case in this cesspool you call a society! Be that as it may, WE have an obligation to OUR people to protect them from such vile predations both at home and abroad in sick cultures such as this! Since we cannot get our daughters back, thanks to that vile bond, WE demand their families be compensated for their loss. Your government has thirty days to pay such compensation to their families in the amount of one hundred thousand Galleons per young girl whose lives your government stole and ruined. Failure to pay, and we shall take such actions as we deem necessary to safeguard our interests and as are consistent under international law!”

“If I may,” Dumbledore croaked seeing an opening to put this boy in his place.

Harry glared at him. He knew what was probably coming and was prepared ... he hoped.

“It is well known in legend that the Dukes of Charenwell maintained Concubines of their own.”

“Do you know what the difference between a wife and a concubine is in my country, Dumbledore?” Harry did not wait for an answer. “If I had a wife, I could divorce her and she could divorce me. Were I to have a concubine, I am stuck with her for life and must provide for her and her children even after death!” Dumbledore looked shocked. “That’s right! CHILDREN! The Charenwell concubines were never simpering slaves or whores in private brothels, but contributing and even revered members of society as respected, if not more so, than

the Duchess! Moreover, neither the Duke nor any of his citizens has the right to sell their women into bondage or sell their bound concubines! My ancestors did not buy sex slaves! They bought the mothers of my line and most of the families in my country! They bought them to preserve our magical population!

Harry turned to Percy, "You have thirty days!"

"And if we refuse," Percy said trying to act confident.

"Then you can explain to your people why ninety percent of their food supply disappeared! We feed you!"

Percy had no idea where their food came from. It was something he would have to look into. If that was not an idle threat...

"One final matter," Harry said. "A few days ago, I received a package in the mail. Well, actually it was delivered to my relatives where Dumbledore had me imprisoned since my parents were murdered. It was routed through agents to my attention and scanned. It was a package of cakes and pies was sent to me because the sender knew my relatives fed me only on occasion. It was laced with a massive dose of amorentia. Do you mind explaining why you wanted to do that to me, Ginny Weasley?"

"ME?" Ginny shrieked. Her face was not reacting like it would if she had known. "Harry! I would never... I have a boyfriend!"

"After analysis by our security forces, the package was turned over to your Aurors. They confirmed that the potion was keyed into you, Ginny. It was also confirmed that it was sent by you, or at least you wrote the note and addressed it. Now try again. Why?"

"I swear Harry! I didn't do it! I couldn't! I'm horrible at potions!"

Harry looked and noticed Molly's eyes shifting as if looking for an escape route.

“She’s right about her potions, Harry,” Luna said. “She’s famous for her exploding cauldrons.”

“It’s just your word,” Molly shrieked. The Goblins made no move as Harry had indicated them to stand fast. “Why should we believe you?”

“Auror Shackelbolt?” Harry asked.

“At the request of the Charenwell government,” Kingsley began, “my office conducted an investigation. There is sufficient evidence to warrant prosecution and a recommendation to that effect was forwarded to the Head of DMLE.”

“Who was conveniently murdered,” Harry added.

“I didn’t do that!” Molly screamed, practically admitting her part in the plot.

“I see,” Harry drawled. “Arthur? A member of your House attempted to gain control over an Ancient and Noble House by magical and unlawful means. You know what my rights are under your law.”

Arthur looked like he was going to be sick. He nodded.

“To avoid a line feud, I demand suitable compensation!”

“Arthur! You can’t! He’s lying!”

“Molly, I have sons who live, even if you seem intent on driving them away.”

“You can’t! You can’t take my baby!”

“You should have thought about that, Dear, before you made the potion,” Arthur said.

“But Dumbledore said it was necessary!”

“DUMBLEDORE IS NOT YOUR HUSBAND!” Arthur bellowed. “YOU LISTENED TO A STRANGER AND THREATEN MY HOUSE WITH YOUR ACTIONS WITHOUT MY APPROVAL!! I STILL HAVE SONS! I CAN LOSE A DAUGHTER!”

“D-Daddy?” Ginny whimpered.

“Go, Ginny,” Arthur wept. “I’ll always love you, but thanks to others you’re his now.”

“N-n-no?”

“I hear by relinquish all rights by blood and law to Ginevra Molly Weasley to Harry, Duke of Charenwell,” Arthur intoned.

There was a flash of magic and Ginny seemed to go into a slight trance. The bond had begun to form, Harry knew. He was not happy with the situation, but if Ginny truly was innocent, he promised he would make it up to her somehow. “Please escort her to the anteroom,” Harry asked a guard and Ginny was escorted away.

“Hypocrite,” Percy muttered once Ginny left the room.

“Excuse me?” Harry asked.

“You rile against the evils of our institutions and concubines, then take my sister to be yours?”

“Lest you forget,” Harry said, “if I wanted her, she was mine! She has owed me a life debt for three years! This was to spare you your life, Percy!”

“You could have turned the other cheek,” Dumbledore said glaring and hoping it would not be too much.

“Unlike you,” Harry said, “as a Head of State, I cannot afford to turn the cheek of those who threaten the security of my country. I am leaving now for my homeland. Pray none give me cause to return! Oh,

and this is my notice that I, Neville Longbottom, Susan Bones, Hermione Granger, Luna Lovegood, Astoria and Daphne Greengrass and Ginny Weasley will not be attending Hogwarts ... ever. We have made alternative arrangements. Ladies?"

Harry shoved a document at Dumbledore as he stood and turned and his four ladies followed him out the door.

Dumbledore sat there dumbfounded. He had been outmaneuvered by a boy barely fifteen years of age. The boy was supposed to be a pliable, little martyr. He was anything but that. Dumbledore had seriously underestimated the lad. He had kept close tabs on Harry for years and thought the boy had no abilities with the fairer sex, a condition he hoped to exploit. Now the boy had two consorts and at least two (soon to be three) concubines and no shame. He had to get the boy back under control or all would be lost. If the boy did not change his mind, the Order would be financially ruined. The boy had laid waste to his world. He was bankrupting wizarding Britain!

"He held all the cards, you know Albus," Minerva said to him. He could only look at her. He was seething right now. "He had all the cards. You never had a chance."

"There will be another day," Albus began.

"Somehow, I doubt that," Minerva said. "As the bound concubine of House Potter for fifty-three years and having fulfilled my previous husbands' duties as their informant, I hereby resign as Deputy Headmistress and Professor at Hogwarts."

A spy!? Albus reached for the traitor and found a wand on him. "As we've become allied to the Goblin Nation, House Potter was not required to relinquish our wands, Albus. Have a nice day."

Albus could only watch as she left, her official resignation laying on the table before him.

Harry, his Consorts and their attendants arrived back in their antechamber ahead of the others. The four Weasley shop girls were

seated together in the room, Ginny was off to one side and appeared to be crying and Harry saw Narcissa laid out on a couch with Mallory attending to her. He walked over to the prone woman. She was either crying or in pain or both. Harry looked at Mallory.

“She’s been beaten,” Mallory said. “Not life threatening, but it’s severe enough. She needs more than a few household remedies.”

Harry nodded. “Hospital?”

“I would recommend that. It also appears she’s been raped. Probably many times in recent days.”

“Who?” Harry asked with anger and concern in his voice.

Narcissa heard that tone. No one had seemed all that concerned about her except for Andy and Sirius and she had lost them to the Pureblood world. She opened her eyes and looked at the young man who was the sworn enemy of her son and later her Husband. She never really knew what the boy could have done to earn such hatred.

“Draco,” she said with difficulty.

Harry looked at her.

“Draco and his friends did this,” she said. “I...” she began but was too weak or in pain to continue. A part of her was pleased to see the look of anger and indignation appear on the young man’s face. The Malfoys were probably safer choosing to be enemies of the Dark Lord than this man.

“I am going to send you to a hospital for treatment now. Do you need anything from your former home, Narcissa?” Harry asked kindly.

“Cissy,” the woman said.

“Excuse me?” Harry replied confused.

“Sirius called me Cissy.”

“Cissy then.”

“C-clothes?” Cissy asked.

“Unless there’s outfits you want for sentimental reasons, once your better my girls will take you shopping for a new wardrobe. They really seem to enjoy that.”

“N-nothing then. Th-that life is dead t-to me. Th-thank you, Your Highness.”

“It’s just Harry, Cissy. Now get better please?”

She nodded.

“Okay Mallory,” Harry sighed. Mallory nodded and shifted away with her patient.

“You take my old Mistress in?” Dobby asked.

“She’s family, Dobby.”

“And her husband and spawn?”

“She’s shot of them now and forever.”

“She was nice on occasion and never mean,” Dobby said. “You are a kind wizard, Harry Potter, Sir.”

“Thanks. Would you and Winky please make sure all of our guests wands are brought here?”

“Immediately, Harry Potter Sir!”

Dobby and Winky popped away and Harry took a seat on a couch with Hermione and Luna at his sides. “That was bloody exhausting,” he sighed.



“You were marvelous,” Hermione said.

“I was glad to be sitting with you, dashing Husband of mine,” Luna said with a smile. “I could tell everyone else at the table was nervous as to who would feel your wrath next. You do know as witches, we find that kind of – er – power very sexy.”

Harry looked at Hermione who was nodding.

“You are so getting shagged,” Astoria whispered to him. She and her sister were seated on the ground leaning against his legs.

“Dibs,” Daphne giggled.

“Oh poo!” Astoria said with a false pout.

“The sacrifices I make for my country,” Harry quipped as he leaned back and allowed his Consorts to snuggle close.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).6.

Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).

Fred Weasley, age 18.1. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).2. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).3. Alicia May Spinnet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.1. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).2. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).3. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE: GINNY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10th, 1996 – GRINGOTTS BANK, LONDON, U.K.

The Weasley boys entered the antechamber with their Consorts. The ladies had sat in the Gallery. They had taken some time to get there as they had to get free of their parents. By the time they arrived, Minerva had already made it back. As they entered, the elf named Dobby handed each of them their wands. Fred and George made a beeline to Harry and his ladies to congratulate them on what the twins considered the greatest prank ever. Angelina and Alicia drifted over to the “Shop Girls,” while Bill and Fleur headed towards Ginny who was still sitting alone.

Ginny soon realized she was not alone. She looked up and saw Bill and Fleur standing before her. She still did not like Fleur at all, but Bill always had been her favorite brother. She leapt to her feet and hugged him, her tears returning. “Oh Bill,” she wailed. “I didn’t know! I didn’t know!”

“I believe you, Gin-Gin,” he said softly. “For what it’s worth.”

“Then why?” she began. “Can you stop this? What’s going to happen to me?”

“We can only suspect and speculate about the why,” to Ginny’s surprise it was Fleur who spoke. “Your mother is not a nice person. She would try and ruin all her children for her own purposes if she could. But why this?” the woman shrugged.

“Once those pies left the Burrow, your fate was sealed, Ginny,” Bill said.

“BUT I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THAT!” Ginny shrieked getting everyone’s attention. “MUM MADE THOSE! ALL I DID WAS SEND A NOTE TO MY FRIEND WITH THEM!! Hold on. YOU KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN?” She was no longer hugging her brother.

“We heard something was up,” Bill said. “We knew Dumbledore was trying to gain even more control over Harry and that Mum would help, even if it meant you were married off to him. We did know that Dumbledore had placed Hermione up for auction and was going to buy Hermione for Ron...”

“WHY DIDN'T YOU WARN ME?”

“We did not know for certain if Mum would go through with it,” Bill said. “If she was determined ... well, you know what she's like. Had you known, she would have done it anyway, probably without your knowing anything and you'd still be where you are right now.”

“Then why did Mum...”

“Act like it was your fault?”

Ginny nodded.

“We've been hearing word since Christmas that there was a plot against Harry to dose him up, get him married to you and get you knocked up before this year was out,” Bill said. “We have sources and they are reliable because that's what Dumbledore said had to happen. But, he and Mum also let slip that this was your idea...”

“MY IDEA? MY IDEA?” Ginny began pacing around. “HARRY'S MY FRIEND! WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO THAT TO A FRIEND?”

“It's not exactly a secret that you fancy him,” Fleur offered.

“ I ADMIT I HAD A SILLY CRUSH ON HIM WHEN I WAS YOUNGER! I was hardly the only one! But that was all it was and it faded! Truth was I was falling for Neville after he asked me to the Yule Ball until I realized I would not be the red head in his life! Had Harry asked me on a date, would I have said no? Probably not! He's cute. He's very nice. He does not strike me as the kind of boy who will reach up your skirt the first chance he gets, which means he's far less annoying than other boys. BUT I WAS NOT DESPARATE TO

BE WITH HIM!! DO YOU THINK I WOULD WANT TO BE PREGNANT BEFORE I'M EVEN FIFTEEN?"

Bill shrugged.

"So Mum wanted people to believe this was all my idea? All my doing? That I wanted Harry, wanted him now, and wanted to get knocked up NOW? That I made the Potion? I can't make a simple potion without blowing up a cauldron! Neville is better at making potions than I am! EVERYONE KNOWS THAT!!"

"You're fourteen, Gin," Bill said. "Who would people believe? You? And what if Mum, Dumbledore and Snape said different?"

"They wouldn't, would they?"

Bill shrugged. "Snape said your grades could be altered, for The Greater Good. Do you see now?"

Ginny shook her head not wanting to believe. "What's going to happen to me?"

"You will become one of Harry's Concubines," Bill said with a hint of disappointment.

"No..." she began.

"When Harry called Dad out, he had no real choice," Bill said. "To save what was left of the family, he had to give you up. It was for the best."

"For the best? FOR THE BEST? YOU THINK I WANT TO BE A CONCUBINE?"

"No woman does," Fleur said. "Look around this room. How many men are there and how many women? Four men, Ginevra. Four men and twelve women. Every woman in here right now is bound to one of the men. Only five of us are Consorts."

“Ginny, our options were limited,” Bill said. “You were being set up if the plan failed. Unless this happened ... you do know the penalty for what happened, don’t you.”

“Prison?” Ginny squeaked. “But I’m innocent!”

“And Dumbledore’s head of the Wizengamot with your Mum and Snape in his pocket,” Bill said. “Do you honestly think you could get a fair trial? Did Sirius Black?”

“No,” she whimpered.

“You were a pawn Ginny. Pawn’s get sacrificed.”

“This makes no sense! Why would Mum do this?”

“It’s a long story, Gin.”

“Try me!”

Bill sighed. “Dumbledore believes that Harry is the only person on Earth who can defeat Voldemort. Now, let’s assume that happens. What would happen next? Dumbledore is not a young man. He knows the last hero gets replaced by the next one. Harry would be Head Warlock, Chief Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards, Headmaster maybe even Minister for Magic very soon thereafter. Dumbledore is a vain man who loves the trappings of control and power. Harry is quite the opposite. Dumbledore is also a Pureblood Supremacists. He does not believe in Voldemort’s view of the world, but he does believe Pureblood society and tradition is best.”

“But he’s not a Pureblood!”

“And neither is Voldemort,” Bill said.

“What about all the Muggle stuff?”

“He feels the current state of the law encourages Muggle baiting which place both the Statute of Secrecy and our world at risk. A more tolerant attitude for Muggles is safer for us all, he believes. And you cannot create that without at least appearing to tolerate Muggle Borns.”

“He doesn’t?”

“One of his main sources of income is selling Muggle Born witches as concubines,” Bill said. “The only ones who avoid that are girls like Hermione who become Consorts or wives before he can auction them off.”

“So what has this to do with anything?”

“Harry is the opposite of Dumbledore in many ways and Dumbledore knows this. A Harry Potter world would really be tolerant and would throw down the Purebloods. They would have no more rights or privileges than anyone. Dumbledore knows he cannot control a Harry Potter who defeated Voldemort once and for all, but that Harry or his heirs would be destined to rule. Now if you cannot control the hero, under the right circumstances you can control the heir. That’s where you came in.”

“But I’d never...! I don’t believe that stuff!”

“But you’re a Pureblood from a family that is allied to Dumbledore and you’re of breeding age.”

“I’m just a breeder?”

“You were to have your first child before you sat for your O.W.L.s. If it was a daughter, your next child would follow within a year and so on and so on, a child or more every year until you bore a son.”

“How would they do that? I wouldn’t want to do that!” Ginny said in disgust. In her mind this was almost worse than being a concubine.

“Potions,” Bill said. “Harry would not be the only one.”

“I think I’m gonna be sick!”

“It gets worse.”

“HOW?”

“Once you bore a son and it was old enough, you would be killed.”

“WHAT??”

“The boy would be raised by Mum, trained to be the Pureblood Supremacist she wanted to raise. He would be Dumbledore’s heir as ruler of our world.”

“And what about Harry?”

“Once Voldemort was dead and his son was born, he would be of no further use.”

Ginny’s jaw dropped.

“He would be killed.”

“How c-could M-Mum...”

“The grieving mother and mother-in-law raising the son as her own, who also had access to the largest fortune in our world, she would have what she wanted.”

“So, if the plan worked,” Ginny growled, “Harry and I would be dead. If it failed, I would be in prison. What just happened, Bill?”

“Harry happened, Ginny,” Bill said. “Even if you’re lying, he was not going to let your life be completely ruined. You were out of your league and he knew it. He would not see you off to prison. Unlike Ron, aside from this you always stood by him and he was sure all you



could have known was that this was a scheme to marry him. On the other hand, he could not let the plan seem to succeed. He loves Hermione and the other part of the plan was for her to become Ron's slave. He needed a third option where you live and avoid prison and Hermione is not Ron's toy. And here we are."

"So the only other option was for me to be Harry's slave?"

"I think," Fleur said, "you will find that Harry's other concubines do not see their situation as that of a slave."

"O-other concubines? You mean Hermione and Luna are not Consorts?"

"No, they are," Fleur said. "As Head of two Ancient and Noble Houses, he's entitled to two Consorts. They chose to bond with him. The others did not choose that initially, but they have since so the only real differences are the way they came to be with Harry and the fact that only the Consorts can be the Duchess or Countess."

"So he kind of did this to save me?" Ginny asked.

"It was the only way given things," Fleur said, "but that is fair. You have a life ahead. Maybe not the one you wanted this morning, but more than you would have had otherwise."

Ginny had refused to look at any of the other women so far, aside from Fleur who had made that impossible, and she soon realized there were fewer people in the room.

"Bill, Fleur?" Fred asked, "come on. We're off to Pottersport. See you later, Gin."

Ginny watched as the room emptied. All that were left were Harry, Hermione, Luna and a blonde haired girl Ginny recognized.

Harry walked over to where Ginny was standing. She could not read his expression. "Harry? Is what Bill told me true? Did my Mum want us dead?"

Harry nodded. "In the end, as I understand it."

"And if you left it to DMLE?"

"You would be in Azkaban."

"What if you ignored it?"

"No telling what other scheme your Mum may have had in store for you, is there?"

Ginny shook her head.

"I don't know if you knew anything, but you never betrayed me before, Gin. I owe you that much. I could not let anything happen to you."

"Th-thanks? What now?"

"I'll have to bind you to me."

"Here? Now? Why?"

"I want to believe you, but I can't take that chance. Our next stop is my home."

"Why does that matter?"

"Because unless you are bound to me, if you are lying you will die crossing my borders. I didn't save you to see you die, Gin."

"What are they here for?"

"Story," he said indicating the blonde she did not know, "is your cross border today."

"My what?"

“We’ll explain later,” Hermione said.

“And I have never bonded a concubine to me without my consorts present. Usually, all my girls are here...”

“And he shags us all silly,” Astoria said.

“...but time is of the essence. If you are telling the truth, we will know by tomorrow and we can have a proper bonding.”

“Proper?”

“You’ll see,” Astoria said with a wink.

“Ginevra Molly Weasley, I Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, by right of Spoils of Honor as granted by Arthur Weasley, your former guardian, claim you as my concubine in heart, mind, body, soul, and magic, to do as I please from this day forward until sale or death shall part you from my House.”

There was a flash of magic. He’s doing this to save me, Ginny thought.

“Strip!”

She did as she was told, blushing but thinking he was doing this to her to save her. She soon was naked before him and the others, her new dress; the best she had ever owned was lying on the floor along with the rest of her clothing.

“A real red head,” Harry chuckled as he looked Ginny over. His hands gently touched her breasts as he leaned in and kissed her deeply. He broke the kiss long before she wanted him to and looked into her eyes. “Nice boobs, too. Smaller than some, larger than others. Soft.” His touch was amazing, Ginny thought. Was it like this for everyone? “And they even have freckles!” He seemed to walk slowly around her touching her from her thighs to her cheek as if memorizing her form by touch. He was behind her and she could feel

he was aroused as he pulled her close to him, returning his hands to her breasts. "Freckles all over," he whispered in her ear in a husky tone as she failed to suppress a moan.

"Should I fix her?" a voice asked.

"What's she mean," Ginny gasped. She gasped again as his right hand slid down her front and was running through her soft red hair between her legs, teasing her. "My girls do not have hair down here," he whispered. "My one little fetish." "We'll leave it for now," he said louder as she moaned when he touched her for the first time. He was rubbing her and she could not help but moan. Three witches were watching. She was facing them, and she could not help anything. "You entered this world with nothing. Nothing but your body and the hair on your head," he said as he really started to find her. "So you shall enter mine! You are going to climax. When you are done, pick up your things and throw them in the fire!" She moaned uncontrollably as the waves of pleasure built rapidly. Merlin he knew what he was doing, she thought. Then it hit her and all thought stopped and a loud moan filled the room.

When reality returned and she had caught her breath, she did as she was told. She picked up the dress her Mum had bought for her just the other day and her under things and shoes and took them to the fire place and threw them in. For a few moments, she watched them burn and with them her old life, one which she wondered whether she would ever miss.

Harry told her to turn around. He was naked. Briefly, she wondered how he could undress so quickly, but saw the other three girls had their wands drawn. She had only once seen an older boy naked like this before. She thought about that moment her First Year when Harry told her to kneel before him. Even then, she had not seen this much of the boy. She didn't think it could be this big. But this was like First Year when she walked into a classroom and found her older brother Percy with his thing in that Penelope girl's mouth. Obviously, that's what Harry wanted her to do to him.

"Do you know what's next?" he asked.

She nodded.

“Have you ever done it?”

She shook her head. Dean Thomas had felt her up once. Aside from that, she had never done more than snog a boy.

“So do it then,” he said and she took him into her mouth. “Don’t stop,” he said, “no matter what happens. Not until I tell you to. That’s it,” he said in an encouraging voice, “in and out.”

She did as he was told, just as she had seen that Penelope girl do to Percy.

“All my other girls can take all of me,” Harry said after a time. “You want to be like them, don’t you?”

She did! But there was a lot to all of him. Still, she was a very competitive girl and tried and tried until she did take all of him. She did that several more times as he groaned with his mounting pleasure. She felt it against her tongue first, and then tasted his release. But he did not tell her to stop, so she didn’t. When he was both much smaller and softer, he told her to stop and stand up. She did as she was told. And when Harry told her to snog Luna and let Luna play with her, she did that too.

“Tongues, Ginny,” Harry said. “It’s only a kiss otherwise. Tongues for snogging.” Ginny had had girl sex last year. But they never snogged. They never even really kissed. “My girls are as good with each other as they are with me,” Harry said. “And it really turns me on! Now be a good girl and bend over at the waist.” She did as she was told and as Luna was shorter than her, she did not have to disobey Harry and stop snogging. It was kind of nice, she thought, and then she felt Harry enter her from behind. She hissed and winced, but he kept entering her. Pain and pleasure, she thought, until he stopped when he could enter no farther. “Hurts a bit?” She nodded. “Let Luna kiss you and make it better,” he said and she complied. As she did, Harry began moving within her.

Ginny almost collapsed from her climax and probably would have if Luna, Harry and the other two girls had not been holding her up. She felt Harry finish and felt pleased that Harry seemed to have enjoyed it and her. She did not even seem to mind that she was not alone with Harry.

Somehow Luna sensed that thought. "Three of Harry's girls he inherited," she said softly. "Including you, five of us were virgins before Harry. We all became both women and his women, and we all did it with at least one of our other sisters watching and supporting us. You will never know another man and you will never be alone again." To her surprise, Ginny actually felt tears of joy and gratitude hearing this.

She frowned as Harry slipped out of her.

"He'll be back," Luna whispered. "As a sister, however, we are here for the others as well."

"Undress Story," Harry commanded and Ginny complied. With all Story was wearing, it took a while and when she was done, Harry ordered her to snog the younger witch and feel her up. Ginny did as she was told. After a couple of minutes, she was told to stop. Story placed her hands on Ginny shoulders and bent over and she watched a rejuvenated Harry enter the blonde as he had done with her earlier.

She felt two pairs of hands on her body and two bodies press against her.

"We are there for our sisters," Hermione said. "Watch Harry and enjoy his pleasuring your sister."

"And we will enjoy pleasuring you," Luna added.

Ginny felt hands on her breasts and between her legs as the two consorts began to pleasure her as well. She soon realized Hermione was taking the lead in her pleasure. "We enjoy each other," Luna said.

"But only when our Harry or other sisters are around. You will never be alone again."

"We are one husband," Hermione said, "and now eight wives and we love each other with all we have."

"Never alone," Luna whispered as she licked Ginny's ear. When Story moaned in climax, Ginny joined her and Harry finished as well. When Story finally stood up after Harry pulled out, Hermione spun Ginny around and kissed her, driving her tongue into Ginny's mouth. Ginny was surprised she had enjoyed all of this. When Hermione broke the kiss, Ginny opened her eyes and they were clearly somewhere else. It was a large bedroom.

"Where are we?" she asked looking around. It was only her and Hermione in the room.

"Potter Manor, Charenwell," Hermione said. "You passed through the Wards safely."

"How?"

"Magic. As a Harry Girl, you now have special magic. I brought you here from Gringotts."

"How far?"

Hermione shrugged. "At least three hundred miles, probably a lot more than that. Now Dora has already sized you up. There are a few outfits in the closets and underwear in the dressers. Nothing fancy. Just enough to tide you over until the girls can take you to buy a proper wardrobe. There is also a robe and slippers in your closet. If it's just us family here, that's all we usually wear."

"Why?"

"' Cause Harry's even better the next time," Hermione giggled. "We all want him to take us and he does is best to do what we want. Clothes just get in the way. But for now, there will be guests, so we

dress appropriately. Get changed and wait here. Our senior concubine will be by in a bit for a chat. After that, you'll join us for dinner."

"Okay. Hermione?"

"Yes Gin?"

"Was your first time special too?"

Hermione nodded with a smile.

"And you weren't alone?"

"Dora was there. We didn't know it at first. I know she missed the oral sex and probably missed our first real time, but once we knew she was there we did not stop and she was there when our bond completed. That night, Dora did sleep in another room from us, but Harry bonded with her the next day, and yes I was there when he did and we both slept with him that night. There are always at least three of us, Ginny. No couples."

"A-and girl sex?" Ginny asked.

"You've done that," Hermione noted.

"N-not with kissing. Bu I d-didn't know you did?"

"That's recent. The day Luna became Harry's Black Consort was the day she and I lost our girl virginity, while Harry was there. We had sex with everyone the next day, and Harry as well. You're actually the first to arrive here who was not a girl sex virgin, Gin. Which do you like more Gin? Girls or boys sex?"

"Boys," Ginny said. "I really did like it! Girls are fun but Harry is better!"



“Just wait ‘til he goes down on you,” Hermione giggled, “now THAT is amazing!”

“When?” she asked hopefully.

“You are not due for another good shagging until you have watched Harry take all of us. That’s sort of your punishment for being involved. If you are innocent, and we think you are, you are going to be rebonded.”

“What? What does that mean?”

“You’re now in House Black,” Hermione said. “Harry will sell you to himself as Lord Potter and you will become Ginny Potter. In doing so, Harry will shag you senseless over and over while we watch, and he’ll shag us so you can watch and catch your breath. Should be fun!”

“And Harry can...?”

“Fourteen times a day, on average...”

“Bloody hell!”

“His record is over thirty, but he’s threatened to cut us off if we ever try that again.”

“Can any one woman do that?”

“Not that we know of,” Hermione smiled. “Much as each of us would love to have Harry all to ourselves all the time, the boy is too much for one witch to handle if we don’t rein him in. With all of us, we don’t have to, although that may change soon.”

“Why?”

“Can’t shag all the time. There are other things that need to get done. Now get dressed and I’ll see you at dinner.” With that, Hermione left Ginny alone.

Ginny found to her surprise that whoever this Dora was had picked underwear that fit perfectly. Not even she was that good. She also found a nice, pale green dress which she thought was simple, especially compared to the gowns she saw earlier, but very pretty and after she put it on she had to admit it was also very flattering. There was a pair of sandals that seemed made for the dress and she soon found herself sitting at a dressing table brushing her long red hair and wondering what had happened. For the first time, she saw the black ribbon around her neck with the silver "BP" at the center. She had heard about these and now knew this was no dream. She was a concubine. Her life seemed totally turned upside down. She was lost in these thoughts and thinking about her first time and how strange yet wonderful it was when there was a knock on her door.

"Come in," she said. She turned and saw her visitor.

"P-Professor McGonagall?" she squeaked.

"Good evening Ginny," Minerva said in a gentle tone. Ginny was speechless. McGonagall never sounded like that and had never called her anything other than Miss Weasley. "And it's Minerva. I'm officially retired from Hogwarts as of today."

"M-M-M," Ginny began. "Retired? I'm sorry. I was hoping... You are one of my best professors and with O.W.L.s coming up ... Do you know who will be teaching me transfiguration this year?"

"I do," Minerva said. "I will."

"But you said you retired."

"From Hogwarts, Ginny, not from teaching. And as none of you are returning to Hogwarts, Harry saw fit to give me that on top of my other responsibilities."

"I'm confused."

“It is a lot to take in. At least you’re not all alone in this like most are.”

“Hermione said the Senior Concubine would be seeing me and...”

“And she is,” Minerva said. “I am her.”

“WHAT!?”

“I have been a Potter concubine for fifty-three years, Ginny. I have been with three men in my entire life. Harry’s Great-grandfather was my first when I was not much older than you. I was with him for a long time. Then there was Harry’s grandfather, although we weren’t as close, and then Harry.”

“You’ve had sex with Harry?”

“Quite a few times in the last two weeks,” Minerva said with a smile. “Not as much as some of the others, but I’d say on average once a day, maybe more. You know it is rather annoying that everyone finds this shocking. Harry, I can assure you, thinks I’m quite sexy; at least when I’m naked and not in my professor mode.”

“But you’re ... you’re ... you’re older than my parents!”

“Indeed,” Minerva smiled. “And Harry does not care. He inherited me and that’s enough for him. I will admit I am a bit old for the nude sunbathing the other girls are so fond of. But aside from that, I am his girl as well. And it’s funny you should mention age. Every one of Harry’s girls is or will be allowed to have his children. That includes me.”

“But...”

“And I am the second of his girls to become pregnant.”

Ginny’s jaw dropped.

“The first is named Mallory. Harry inherited her from Sirius Black. She was at the Will reading today. She is his second oldest at thirty-nine. If that trend holds, Dora should be next. She’s twenty-one. She turns twenty-two later this month, day after tomorrow to be exact although I think she’s forgotten that. That would mean Hermione should be third, Daphne fourth, then Luna, then you and then Astoria.”

“You can still get pregnant?”

“Sixty-eight is old for that, even for a witch,” Minerva admitted. “Truth is, while we live a lot longer than Muggles, we are normally not fertile longer. But Hermione thinks the Concubine bond freezes our reproduction. Reproductively, if she’s correct, I am barely sixteen.”

“How does that work?”

“The bond prevents conception normally,” Minerva said. “Harry can break that part of the bond and we can have children. But if he does not, we can’t. Most concubines never have that broken. All you have to do, Ginny, is ask and he will let you have children. Right now, only you and Astoria don’t have permission. Story hasn’t asked yet. She’s a couple months younger than you and for now she wants to wait until next summer. Because Luna is in your year, even though she is almost a year older than you, if you ask, Harry might agree.”

“Might?”

“Today you have only taken your first step towards becoming all you can be here, Ginny. You probably did not wake up this morning thinking ‘hooray, I become a concubine today!’”

“It never crossed my mind. Not once. Not until Harry demanded something from my father for what my mother did or tried to do. I was stunned, to be honest. I was crushed! I had no idea she was doing that and I had to pay the price? Why? But I spoke to Bill and Fle-Fleur and they explained it to me and it made sense in a peculiar sort of way.”

“What did they tell you?”

“Will they get in trouble?”

“No. I wouldn’t be surprised if Harry suggested it. Bill and Fleur have been trying to help Harry since they first thought your Mum was up to something and Bill does care about you. Besides, your reaction hardly went unnoticed. Harry said it was good that you heard it from Bill.”

“Bill said Harry did this to save me.”

“A fair assessment. We could not think of any other way. My concern was that if we did nothing, your mother would try to use you in some other way. This was the only way we could think of to both expose her for what she is and save you from her and Dumbledore.”

“Today was just my first step you said?”

Minerva nodded. “Right now, you are a true concubine. You can still think, have ideas and opinions, but they are suppressed around Harry. At least they are if he wants them to be or if they are contrary to your loyalty bond. You cannot hurt him. Even if you had plotted his murder before today and still think that way deep inside...”

“I NEVER!!”

“Just by way of example,” Minerva said soothingly, “you can’t hurt him if you wanted to. Even Hermione can’t hurt him on purpose, but she can ignore him and you can’t. Your true free spirit is suppressed.”

“It didn’t really seem like that when...”

“Perhaps, deep down, the real Ginny wants Harry to be a part of her life and is not truly concerned about how she fits into it.”

“Perhaps.”

“But right now, even if your mind is screaming no, no, no; you will do anything Harry tells you to short of self-destruction and if he enjoys it, so will you or at least so will your bond. A Consort can say no. A Consort can tell Harry his ideas are silly. You cannot even if you know it’s true. But, Harry can hurt you, criticize you and lie to you. The true Concubine bond is a one way street. The Consort bond is two way. Harry would sooner hurt himself than Hermione. He would sooner lie to himself than to Hermione. Same’s true with Luna now. They can never intentionally hurt each other; they live for each other’s happiness and are there to help each other.”

“And you?”

“I and the others are Love Bonded. This bond we chose of our own free will. We chose to love Harry above all others and he chose to love us back. That makes the bond reciprocal. I am all but equal to Hermione in terms of my bonds with Harry. The sole difference is the true Consort is always first in his heart. The rest of us are tied for a close second. Throw in the permissions for children, and it is as close to being a true wife and partner as we can hope for and better than being a real one in many cases.”

“You have to love him, right?”

“It doesn’t have to be romantic love to take hold, Ginny. The love of a friend works. Any kind of love where you would willingly subordinate your needs for his works. For me, it was not unlike the love of a mother for a child. For the others, it was different, but it worked and we are all love bonded to him. This also means he can never break his promise to us to keep us with him forever.”

“I could do that.”

“Harry believes that to be true, Ginny.”

“When?”

“After you are rebonded to the Potter Line.”

“And that will be?”

“While we are almost certain you knew nothing of your mother's or your brother Ron's plans, we need to be sure. Day after tomorrow at the latest.”

Ginny nodded.

“Any other questions?”

“This thing,” Ginny said indicating her collar. “I've heard about them, but never seen them.”

“I'm not sure if it has a name,” Minerva said. “You will note I have one too?”

Ginny did notice it. She hadn't really looked before, but there it was – a black collar around her neck.

“It is a symbol,” Minerva said. “It is said to remind us we are bound to a certain man. But it is more than that. That collar allows him to summon you to him at anytime. Many concubines do not live with their men. When their men need them, they are summoned and your collar takes you to him. It's powerful magic. There's not a ward known to wizards that can prevent you from responding to a summons. If you were locked up, chained and bound, you would return when he calls. It also allows you to summon him, but only if you are in danger. Again, right now if he chose to respond, nothing would prevent him from coming. Once you are love bonded, if you are in danger and summon him, he will come. He will come and probably summon us as well. You can also use it to go where he asks you to or come home – here – whenever you want to or need to. You don't even need a want to activate it. You merely think it and it works.”

“Wow! Why can I see yours?”

“Because I am bonded to Harry too,” Minerva said. “Although Harry's case is unique. When you first bonded, you could only see the collars of those bonded to the Lord Black Harry. That's why there

was that other bonding, where he had sex with another witch. She was a Potter witch and in that rite, her act bonded you to House Potter as well.”

“Why do I have to rebound then?”

“Harry wishes it.”

“Oh.”

“There a few other things you should know before we go down to supper,” Minerva began.

“Are they bad?”

Minerva chuckled. “I guess that depends upon your point of view. First of all, this room is your room. You have your own bath as well. There is a common room outside your door and a similar bedroom and bathroom on the other side. These were guest suites in the past. We are on the second floor of the Manor. Harry’s bedroom is on the first floor as are the suite of rooms Hermione and Luna use when they are not Harry’s bedmates. This is where you will sleep when you’re not in Harry’s bed. And, with the possible exception of the night you rebond to Harry, and your birthday, when you sleep with him you won’t be the only witch in his bed. The family dining room is also on the first floor as are some other rooms for living and lounging. The ground floor has the public rooms, including the library. Your rebonding will be in the library.”

“Why there?”

“That’s where all Harry’s witches were bound to him. You will bond with him on the same couch, the same place where Hermione, Luna, Daphne and Astoria lost their virginities and became his and where Dora, Mallory and I became his. Harry would have preferred to bond you there today, but the risks of the wards precluded it. That’s a big reason why he wants you rebounded. That way, you can share similar memories with the rest of us.”



“Wh-who will be there?”

“All of us, Ginny.”

“Oh.”

“Just as you’ll be there when the newer witches are bound.”

“Newer witches? What do you mean newer witches? Harry was quite clear he thinks all of this is horrible! Yet, here he is with six of us and he wants more?”

“He doesn’t want more, Ginny. I doubt he wanted any of us really. But, while it would have been easy for him not to take us, it would have been wrong too. It would have ruined Dora, Mallory and me. We would have been sold or, at my age, let go. Most concubines in Britain are little more than toys, and the boys share their toys. In my case, my status would have become public. I would have been ruined. Daphne and Astoria would have been sold at auction, most likely to Draco Malfoy who forced their sale in the first place. We are better off with Harry, Ginny, much better off.

“The other girls are witches, some of them younger than you. They’re all to be sold at auction on Monday and Harry’s buying the lot of them. Some of them are people you know like Katie Bell and the Patil girls.”

“Oh my!”

“You should talk to Mallory or Neville’s concubine Amber about what most concubines’ lives are like. They did not begin with a well meaning man, but as little better than whores. Would you wish that on someone?”

“No,” Ginny said in a soft voice.

“Hermione is as outraged about this as anyone. Yet she is the one who convinced Harry to keep his inherited women, to buy the

Greengrass sisters, to consider using this to help you and to buy the others.”

“Greengrass sisters?”

“Astoria and Daphne.”

“Funny,” Ginny said, “I almost didn’t recognize them. They seem so nice. Not nearly as stuck up as at school.”

“See what being a Harry Girl can do?”

“Harry Girl?”

“It’s what we call ourselves.”

“I kind of like it. You said Neville earlier? Neville Longbottom?”

Minerva nodded. “He, his Consort – the former Miss Susan Bones – and his concubine Amber were brought here following the attacks last week, as was Luna.”

“I didn’t know he…”

“Susan became Neville’s Consort the afternoon of the attack. Amber had been a Longbottom Concubine since Neville was born, but he did not bind her to him until the day after Susan became his Consort. They are living here now, along with Neville’s parents. They’re on the third floor of the Manor. They too are about to get a lot more witches such as Lavender Brown, Hannah Abbott, and your brother Percy’s witch Penelope Clearwater.”

“Penelope’s a…?”

“And Percy is selling her, yes.”

“Why?”

“We don’t know. But he is. Harry’s buying every witch he can, within reason. All the first time concubines and a few more seasoned ones. He’s going to offer ten times the market rate to both ensure he gets them and can pass them on to a good home and to hopefully mess up the market so that this year’s auction is practically the last.”

“He’s doing this for all the girls like me he can?”

Minerva nodded.

“Hermione said he has this saving people thing.”

“He does indeed. Anyway, our routine here is simple. The Longbottoms and other guests usually avoid the First Floor except when invited for meals and we steer clear of their suites unless invited.”

“Why?”

“While we Harry Girls don’t mind when our sisters are around when having sex, this is not a spectator sport open to the public. And the custom in this House is once the sex starts, every witch who wants to play, plays. You are not, however, required to. Now that we’ve included both Harry and Harry Girls on our ‘dance cards,’ we don’t have to sit around and wait for Harry to have fun. You’ll see. Mallory and I are not as – er – hormonally driven and are busy during the week, but we do help when we can. You still need your three orgasms a day. As the summer moves along, Harry won’t be able to provide them all. His schedule and the number of needy witches will preclude that. Hermione will work out a schedule that will ensure you sleep with Harry and have sex with him as often as possible, but don’t feel the need to do it yourself if he’s not available. Besides, we’ve found he really enjoys watching us.”

“What boy wouldn’t,” Ginny said.

“One other thing, just in case you’re thinking it’s been otherwise with us,” Minerva said. “Your bonding and rebonding are the only times Harry is going to tell you what to do with him. The closest any of us

have come to being ordered is when he asks if we would like our turn. Until you love bond with him, you couldn't say no, but we all have deferred in favor of our sisters or later. And all of us have asked him to take us. Not every day, mind you, but he's more than willing to see to our needs. Just don't be surprised if there's a line waiting for their turn when you're done."

"Can I ask you something?"

"Anything."

"How does Harry compare?"

"In what way?"

"I mean to other men. He was my first and it sounds like he'll be my only and..."

"I was only with two others, Ginny. How do you think he did?"

"I – it was weird, not at all the way I thought my first time would be."

"I think just about any woman can say that."

"I mean there were other women with us and ...well, it did hurt. But it was sooo good in the end. He and the others gave me my three for the day, but he was the best when he made me a woman."

"And what were you thinking?"

"I wanted to enjoy it. I guess I figured... I don't know, I just sort of accepted it as if this was how it was supposed to be for me and didn't mind at all. Then again, he was really good at getting me going."

"Well, to answer your original opinion," Minerva says, "and you must understand it had been years since the last time for me, Harry granddad and I did not do it that often at all. His Great-granddad and I,

well that was another story. He was good. But right now it seems neither of them were as good as Harry.”

“So I should consider myself lucky?”

“A positive attitude helps,” Minerva said with a smile. “Now let’s head down to dinner.”

Ginny followed Minerva down to dinner and was stunned at the size of this house, and its opulence. The “Family Dining Room” was larger than the entire ground floor of the Burrow. She saw that Harry and the others had changed into more casual attire and were standing around talking with the others in the room. She could tell the Harry Girls from the others right away as they had their collars. She knew one! It was Tonks! That must be the Dora she had heard about as she knew the other blonde girl to be “Story’ s” sister Daphne.

Mallory was the first of her other “sisters” to speak to her. She introduced herself and said she wasn’t there because duty had called. Mallory was a Healer? That was a surprise, as was learning that Mallory had been Sirius thirteenth birthday present. She was also surprised to learn that Sirius had shared her with a couple of his friends.

“But don’t worry, Ginny,” Mallory said. “Harry’s not like that at all. He’s our only man.”

She was then grabbed by the two blonde sisters. “We just have to talk to you, girl,” Astoria said.

“Was it fun?” Daphne asked.

“In a way, it was,” Ginny said. “Strange, but I enjoyed it. Well, except when it hurt a little.”

“Yeah, well that’s supposed to happen,” Astoria said. “We had our first with Harry too. It was wonderful in the end. Daphne was with me when I became a woman and I was with her when she did. Made it kind of special.”

“And remember,” Daphne said, “while you are going to be a Potter, you were a Black first.”

“Just like me!” Astoria said. “I was a Black first. Then Daphne joined me as a Black, and then I was a Potter.”

“Why? Why a Black first and then a Potter?” Ginny asked.

“I had to be bound to Lord Black to fulfill the terms of the contract and vow between my father and the Death Eaters who thought they were selling Daph and me to Draco Malfoy. Once I was a Black, Harry rebound me to House Potter. Balance, he calls it I think. So I had to go through the bonding twice in an afternoon. Of course, the second time was truly wonderful,” Astoria added with a sigh.

“And then Harry took me again so I wouldn’t feel left out,” Daphne said with a grin.

“Would you have?”

“I didn’t know at first. But after our first time, yes.”

“It all happened the same afternoon,” Astoria said.

“Well, enough about the fun stuff,” Daphne said. “We’ve got years to compare notes and stuff. Tomorrow we’re going shopping...”

“And you’re coming,” Astoria finished.

“They got me clothes...” Ginny began.

“That’s just for a few days, we’ll need to fill your closets girl,” Daphne said. “You’re the Duke’s lady now! You’ll need all kinds of clothes!”

The two girls spent several minutes talking about outfits and dresses and gowns for formal occasions and State functions until Ginny’s

mind was spinning. Even if they bought half of what they said she “needed,” it was more than she had ever had before. Still, it did sound like fun.

Dora pulled her away just when she was about to suffer from information overload. She really didn’t need to know how much Astoria loved Harry’s man bits right now, did she?

Dora was with two older people. “Wotcher, Gin,” she said brightly.

“Tonks? I thought it was you!”

“It’s Dora,” Dora said. “I’d like you to meet my parents Ted and Andy.”

“Pleased to meet you.”

“Dora says you’re the newest edition to Harry’s collection,” Ted said with a smirk.

“Erm,” she did not know what to say.

“I was forced into selling my only daughter during the last war,” the man said. “She wasn’t even born yet.”

“You can become one before you’re born?” Ginny asked in shock.

“No,” Dora said, “the right to make you one can be sold then. You can’t become one until you’re old enough. In my case I was not quite thirteen.”

“We knew she was one most likely,” Andy said. “Once that sort of thing is done, it’s almost inevitable. We suspected it happened while she was in school, but not until later than it did. But she became an Auror, so whoever had done it to her was at least halfway decent to her. It wasn’t until today we were told everything. I don’t really understand how the bonding happened for her, but now she’s with Harry – as are you – and he seems to be really decent to her and the other ladies we’ve met.”

“My contract was held by Sirius Black,” Dora said as if she was explaining this for the one hundredth time. “He got it from his dad the same day he took Mallory. He was in Azkaban when I was old enough to be bound. But when he took Mallory, he let two friends have open permissions to play with her too. Apparently, the permission was so open ended it would apply to any concubine he had rights to. One of his two friends was killed. The other bound me by proxy as soon as I was old enough and on holiday from school. I wouldn’t meet Sirius for years.”

“So who did you first bind with?” Ginny asked.

“Remus Lupin was my binder,” Dora said. “He was nice enough about it. But I was twelve and it freaked me out. How was yours?”

“I kind of enjoyed it,” Ginny said unsure. “Okay, I guess I really enjoyed it. It was not how I imagined any of that would be, though.”

“We don’t need to know the details,” Ted Tonks said. “The basics of how it works here have been explained. From what I’ve heard, you girls are the lucky ones.”

“If this had to happen to our only baby,” Andy said, “then she did real well for herself in the end. Given what happened to Dora and to my two sisters, if I had to choose, I’d rather have had Dora’s life.”

“Your sisters are...,” Ginny began.

“Opposite end of the spectrum. I was from a “proper” Pureblood family with money. My parents sold us in marriage not as concubines. I was betrothed to Lucius Malfoy. Hated the guy. I became Ted’s Consort in school because I loved him and knew my father would never let me marry a Muggle Born and because I knew it would break my contract with the Malfoys. My other two sisters were not so fortunate. Bellatrix Lestrange is one of them. I’m so glad she’s dead. The other replaced me and until today was Lucius Malfoys’ wife. Compared to those two, Dora’s been lucky her whole life.”



The Tonks were here for two reasons, Ginny learned. The former Mrs. Malfoy was in a nearby hospital. Before Harry had annulled her marriage and taken her under house protection, she had been beaten and apparently raped by her son and his friends. Andy was here for her sister in her time of need. The other reason was a hope Harry had that at least some of the families of his girls could be reunited with their daughters in some way without too much difficulty. Harry knew the Greengrass family was looking forward to coming and living here. Like Dora's parents, they had been forced to sell their daughters but, according to Dora, who was there when Harry agreed to buy the girls, their parents were very pleased with him as their girls' new family.

She spoke with Bill and Fleur briefly. She thanked them both, Fleur especially for their talk earlier. True, it was Bill who did most of the talking, but Ginny took advantage of his asking her how she was doing to apologize to Fleur for being such a brat. She really didn't think Fleur was all that bad, but her mother had hated the French which and that had clouded her judgment. Given who her mother really turned out to be, being hated by Molly meant you had to be a good person.

The Longbottoms were there as well. Neville and Susan seemed really happy together and Amber, who Ginny learned had known and cared for Neville practically from the day he was born also looked very happy. It didn't hurt; Susan told Ginny, that in a way the shoe was now on the other foot as they had recently learned Amber was pregnant with Neville's child. No, Ginny learned, Susan was not jealous. She hoped to be in a very similar condition soon. To Ginny, it appeared that Neville's parents were very accepting of the entire situation. Although both Susan and Amber told her they had to warm to it.

The big surprise was learning Fred and George were there as well. Well, Ginny thought, maybe not as big as learning her two brothers also had Consorts and concubines. She had played Quidditch with Alicia and Angelina (and would never tell her brothers that she had girl sex with them as well), but she was stunned to learn that they were now like Hermione, Luna and Susan, Consorts with a small group of concubines to look after, even if each of the Twins two

concubines were actually older than their Consorts. The girls had come with the store? They had two jobs? Shop Girls in front and sex toys in back? Apparently, the twins were as appalled as Ginny about the girls past employer and how their former back room customers had kept coming around. It was no surprise to Ginny to learn that the Twins had fled to Charenwell that day. She apologized for not talking to them back in London, but they seemed to understand. Fortunately, their attempts at giving their sister a ribbing for becoming a Harry Girl were quashed by six witches who did not find it either appropriate or in good taste. That the twins could be controlled was stunning. Then again, they were outnumbered three to one.

Ginny was pleased to learn the Twins had moved here as well. They would be staying in one of the Potter guest houses for a little while. While there was room at the Manor on the Third Floor, as the Longbottoms were there it was decided not to have the twins there as well. This was in part for privacy and in part because it seemed Neville and Harry did not trust the Twins to completely behave themselves. For Ginny, however, learning that she had not lost all of her family because of her stupid mother made the day even better.

One thing she learned talking to all the other concubines, regardless of whom they were bound to, she was the only one there not love bonded to her binder. She asked how it was done and was almost disappointed that there was no real sex involved, "but that doesn't mean there can't be," more than one woman told her. That was a situation she intended to remedy with Harry as soon as possible.

Dora, Hermione and Luna all questioned her about what she knew about her mother's plotting. Ginny admitted, for a long time her mother had thought she and Harry would be good together and Ron needed someone like Hermione, but she didn't think it meant anything, really. She was over her crush, and while that didn't mean she would have turned down a date with Harry or even a chance at being his girlfriend, she was not pining for him or plotting to make him hers. She was horrified to learn just how much love potion was in those confections. Had Harry eaten them (and had he not been already bound to not just one but many women, which apparently counteracts the potions), he would probably have raped Ginny on sight, unless she gave in. She did have a laugh thinking what her

mother would have thought of Harry shagging her at the dinner table in the Burrow. It would not have been her fault, after all.

Just before everyone sat down for dinner, Harry pulled her aside. Apparently, the bond she now had was such she not only could not lie to Harry, she could not lie to his other bond mates. The questioning was on purpose. Harry was satisfied that she knew nothing about what her mother and Ron were up to. As such, she would be rebonded perhaps as early as tomorrow. Tonight, however, if Harry could get through the other six witches, she could have her Harry Time.

She ate sitting between Luna and Daphne and having to suffer, blushing furiously, through each of them whispering about their various playtimes with Harry in shocking detail. This was going to be a very different life.

Not long after dinner and after all the guests had left, Ginny found herself in the Great Room on the First Floor in nothing but her robe and slippers, standard “uniform” for Harry Girls, she was told. She was also told that Harry had never said a thing about that. The Harry Girls did it of their own accord. Just her robe meant just that, Harry Girls did not wear anything underneath “except desire,” one of them said. The robes had charms on them so you felt as if you were clothed, she discovered and other charms that prevented them from revealing too much if anyone but the Family was around.

Harry and the others were waiting when she arrived. They too were in robes, but the slippers were already off and lined up in a row. Ginny took that hint. She was told to stand in the center of a place surrounded by couches, face “her Husband,” and remove her robe, which she did. She might have done it anyway, she would never know. She did know the bond would have overcome any reluctance, except she could not recall feeling any. She was told to turn around slowly and look each of her “new sisters” over, head to toe. This part, she knew, the bond made her do without hesitation. Each was now naked and not covering up in any way so she could get a good look, she thought. Objectively speaking, from oldest to youngest, it was an attractive lot, Ginny thought. She could even see why Harry found a naked McGonagall sexy. They were all different shapes and sizes,

but they all had one thing in common: no body hair as far as she could see.

When she completed turning around and was facing Harry again, he told her to raise her arms over her head. Hermione got up with a wand and did something. When she finished she said: "Now you are a real Harry Girl because you're no longer a hairy girl, get it?" Ginny guessed at what Hermione meant and looked and saw her red patch was gone. "Oral sex is better this way," Hermione said, "and it's not as dirty down there. But, if you are dressed and get truly aroused, your knickers will be wetter than before."

"Ginny?" Harry began, "we have determined that you knew nothing of the vile schemes arrayed against us. Your bond prevents you from lying to me. Not even veritaserum is as effective. Because of what your mother did, custom, practice require some punishment and as I said earlier, your primary punishment is I won't make love to you until you have watched me make love to all my other girls first, and Astoria's being your cross bonder does not count. Once I make love to you again, your punishment is at an end. I want your punishment to end tonight so that I may take you to bed with my Consorts. You will be rebonded not later than Friday afternoon. At that time, you will become Madam Ginny Potter-Black and anytime after that you may choose to take the Love Bond and ask to become the mother of our children. Also, once your punishment is over, I will treat you as I do all my girls. You will not be ordered to do anything sexual ever again. Until then, however..." Harry opened his robes and Ginny could see he was aroused, "I think a little blow job practice is in order."

She learned her role in this night's activities. Harry seemed to appreciate some appropriate stimulation to prepare for his next partner. That was Ginny's role and the role of one of the other witches. Once Harry finished in her mouth, Ginny was ordered to have sex with Astoria, each pleasuring the other with their mouths and tongues and not stopping until the other was satisfied. Then Ginny had to sit close while Harry made love to Minerva. The routine was set. Ginny got Harry ready having sex with the other witches from the youngest to the oldest while Harry made her watch him as he had them in order from oldest to youngest, excluding her of course.

When it was Astoria's turn with Harry, Ginny had already run through all the others and was surprisingly tired. Harry didn't seem that way at all, which explained why the others all seemed to agree he was too much for them alone. This last time, however, was different. Harry invited Ginny to share him with Astoria. While Astoria rode his wand, Ginny learned why the others thought he was the best of the lot at oral sex. Once all three were finished, a short break was allowed and many headed for the loos to freshen up a little. Then it was Ginny's turn. As tired as she was, he entered her and brought her to three mind blowing climaxes before he finished. Even after all that, he made sure there was more Harry fun with her, Hermione and Luna before the lot of them finally fell asleep in a pile sometime after midnight.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how. Since someone asked, I'm adding 1 thing. P indicates the woman is expecting.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

- Harry James Potter, age 15.1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

8. Ginevra Molly Weasley, age 14 (8/11/81) (Gr-4); CONCUBINE OF HOUSE BLACK 7/10/96.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

2. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

3. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

2. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

3. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO: THE OTHER SHOE

THURSDAY, JULY 11th 1996 – Potter Manor, Duchy of Charenwell.

She was having a wonderful dream. It was her wedding day and her perfect Husband and her were about to say their vows after which they would eat and dance the night away before spending that night, and almost every night thereafter, doing very naughty things to each other and making a large family. She looked and saw her bridesmaids, all in wedding dresses as well, but that was okay since they would be very naughty with her and her husband later that night and forever after. A part of her wanted to think that was strange, but it seemed perfectly normal so she let that go. It was perfect, until her brother Ron came in and started having a fit about cats or something. That ruined the mood and the dream faded.

Ginny still had her eyes closed, but could tell it was day light. Her bed never felt this cozy or safe, or warm before. She was on her side, which was not her normal sleeping position, but it was very comfortable and snug and she was draped over a wonderful pillow that had the perfect little nook for her head. Then her pillow breathed.

Her eyes flew open and she could see the pillow was all skin and but inches from her head was a chin, beyond which was a sleeping face with long, curly, brown hair. She then remembered. Harry was her pillow. The other head belonged to Hermione. There was a hand on her right shoulder which seemed like it was Harry's, then again the hand cupping her right breast could be his too. And a body was snuggled into her back as well. One with boobs! Luna, she thought as she opened her eyes again and saw Hermione's brown eyes watching her.

"Sleep well?" Hermione whispered.

"Mmmm," Luna replied with a content smile on her face for she had indeed.

“Me too,” Luna whispered, her lips clearly in Ginny’s hair. “I had this nice, warm pillow that’s soft in all the fun places...” she added gently squeezing Ginny.

“As this is your first morning,” Hermione said, “you can wake him up if you want.”

“Wake Harry?”

“Well,” Hermione said taking Ginny’s hand and guiding it beneath the sheets to where the other Harry slept, “part of him at least.”

It sounded like fun, so Ginny coaxed the little one out of its slumber and then decided that even though she was sore, she wanted to try it on top. The oral sex with Harry and the others in the bath was fun too.

After breakfast and watching Harry’s morning “workout” with Daphne and Astoria, Ginny found herself dressed in a nice outfit and seated in the back seat of what she was told was a very expensive motor car with the two Greengrass sisters. She was told they were going shopping for her new wardrobe. She had also been told that these two girls knew clothes and could make a pig look elegant.

“So, how was your first day?” Astoria asked as the car pulled away from the largest building Ginny had ever seen and past one of two major construction sites very close by.

“It’s not over yet,” Ginny noted. “Not what I expected.”

“Better or worse?”

“Much better,” Ginny sighed, “although I think I’m walking funny.”

“We were too,” Daphne chuckled. “Our Harry really can wear you out.”



“Only because you can’t get enough of him and then, you had far too much,” Astoria said. “Daphne and I had a wonderful bonding, but the next morning was a little uncomfortable.”

“We were thinking of putting a warning in the book about pacing yourself with him, but we don’t think it will work,” Daphne said.

“Nope,” Astoria agreed. “He wore out Hermione and Luna as well their first day.”

“And Dora and she wasn’t even close to being a virgin anymore.”

“And the others?” Ginny asked.

“They had day jobs.” Daphne said. “The rest of us had nothing better to do other than Harry.”

“But Dora’s an Auror,” Ginny said.

“And a member of Dumbledore’s Order,” Daphne said. “Actually, until recently she was a spy for our country in both groups. Her job for both this summer was to keep an eye on Harry. The Ministry didn’t know where he was, but knew that she did and Dumbledore didn’t trust her with other things so he had her ‘watch’ Harry. The night he got back to his vile relatives, she snuck into his room and brought him here. Of course, had either Dumbledore or the Ministry known that, they’d probably say she kidnapped him.”

“Did you put that in the book?” Astoria asked.

“After getting the full story from Dora and Remus about how they got Harry out, their plans and such to do so and how they tricked Dumbledore right up until yesterday when our Harry pulled the rug out from under him, yes. I need to review our memories about that one. I’d really love to see yours, Ginny. As you were not yet one of us, that should be a very interesting perspective.”

“Book? What book?”

“Books actually,” Astoria said. “All of us girls are helping write handbooks, both for ourselves and for the others who will be joining us. One volume we’ll share with the Longbottoms and probably the Weasley Twins as well. It’s all about Consorts and Concubines and the various bonds we have, strongly recommending Love Bonding. Personally, I like knowing that I really do enjoy being with Harry. It also includes stuff about the history of this place, a travel guide – although that’s a work in progress – witch’s health – Mallory wrote that as she’s a Healer, she also wrote the section on children and their care and such – the Investiture, all kinds of things. The other book is specific to our family. That book contains each of our life stories, when we first became involved in any way with Harry, how we came to be his girls, our bonding itself. That book also has the guidelines for sex and all that based upon what has evolved since Hermione practically jumped Harry’s bones the day after we left school.”

“She jumped his bones?”

“Well, they became boyfriend/girlfriend when she woke up after your little adventure in the Ministry. Pretty much nothing more risqué than snogging from then until King’s Cross. When she got home, she wrote him a long letter which begged him to find a way to see her and promised him she would – er – give herself to him the moment they met again or whatever. Dora brought her here the day after we got back from Hogwarts and he got that letter while they were eating lunch.”

“She said she was so embarrassed,” Astoria added.

“She also said he acted like it was nothing,” Daphne continued. “Anyway, he took her to see his Library knowing she would be thrilled. Have you seen it yet?”

“No,” Ginny said.

“Bigger than Hogwarts by far,” Astoria said.

“And much nicer,” Daphne added. “Anyway, she got there and once she could think again, she stripped naked and jumped him.”

“They went at it like bunnies all afternoon,” Astoria said. “Didn’t even pause when Dora came in and pulled up a chair to watch. They completed the bond without even knowing it.”

“How?”

“Hermione read about it in a trashy romance novel she nicked from one of her roommates. Thought it was just a plot device, but it sounded so romantic. So she did the oath while doing Harry. Presto! They’re married.”

“But everyone knows about that,” Ginny began.

“Those of us raised as witches by witches do,” Daphne said. “Hermione was a Muggle Born and never was much into that sort of talk. And you won’t find anything about those bonds in the Hogwarts library.”

“Why not?”

“Dumbledore banned those books. He can’t have witches he can sell becoming Consorts before he can profit from them, can he?”

“That man is pure evil,” Astoria said.

“Tell me about it,” Ginny said remembering her talk with Bill. “So Hermione and Harry went at it all afternoon?”

“Poor Hermione did it ten times the day she lost her virginity,” Daphne said. “It was a good thing Dora bonded the next day, ‘cause Hermione was too sore for anything.”

“I would never have guessed she would be so ... randy,” Ginny said.

“Would you have guessed you would be?” Astoria asked.

“Excuse me?”

“Last night? Probably this morning as well. That’s something you knew all along you would jump into and enjoy?”

“You have a point.”

“While your bond may compel you to do what he says, it cannot make you enjoy it deep down inside. Yet you did, didn’t you?”

Ginny nodded. “A lot,” she admitted. “I kind of wish I wasn’t so sore right now ... and Harry was here needing a girl.”

“We think it’s Harry,” Daphne said. “You know they called me the Ice Princess at school.”

Ginny nodded.

“And I was the Ice Handmaiden,” Astoria said.

“Why...?”

“We came to Harry virgins,” Daphne said. “I was the last virgin in my year.”

“As was I,” Astoria said. “Slytherin boys expect you to spread your legs for them as soon as you are known to have had a period. At the end of Third Year, most girls who have held out are raped. After that, your role is to get naked and have sex with any boy with a hard on near you. The reason why Slytherins are dead last in grades is not just because we have some real idiots, is because it’s hard to study with a boy’s cock in your mouth while another takes you from behind.”

“Or when you know that might happen if you let your guard down for even a second,” Daphne added. “Astoria and I practically lived in the Library and quickly became faster and better with our wands than any

boy in Slytherin. That and we don't need wands to keep a boy away. Wasn't like that in Gryffindor, was it?"

"There was girl sex in the girl's dorms and showers," Ginny said, "but only if you wanted it. No one made you do that. Nothing like that in the Common Room."

"And you were not expected to service your Head of House either, were you?"

"You mean Snape?"

"He didn't break in virgins, but once you gave it up in the Common Room, you could be called to his office for some extra instruction, usually of the sweaty and horizontal nature."

"Merlin's Beard! So that means Millicent Bulstrode..."

"She started second year by taking off her clothes and claiming she could do the whole Seventh Year boy's dorm and still wear out the Sixth Years," Daphne said. "The boys will do any girl. They like both willing and unwilling ones."

"Parkinson?"

"Betrothed to Malfoy," Daphne said. "Could have given her protection as that's one line those animals don't cross unless her betrothed let them, which Draco did. Used her with Snape too. Then again, with Malfoy as your boyfriend, you probably would need a gang bang to climax. It's said he could rape you and you would never even know it."

Ginny looked confused.

"He's got a really little dick," Astoria said.

"Oh."

“As you can imagine, almost anything seems better than being a girl in Slytherin and, to be honest, Harry aside, this is paradise! I can’t wait to tell Daddy how happy we are!”

“Excuse me?”

“Our family is going to move here sometime in the next few months,” Daphne said. “It broke Daddy’s heart to have to sell us at all, even though Harry said he was pleased it was to him. If he learns what we really feel, that this is probably the best life we could ever have hoped for ... well, maybe he’ll forgive himself. So, what about your life before all this?”

“And you can skip this past year,” Astoria said. “We’ve heard a lot about that from the others.”

So Ginny began telling them about her life.

Hermione was sitting in the Conservatory enjoying a cup of tea and some “light” reading late in the afternoon when a groan and a flop distracted her. Across from her was Ginny, slumped in a chair looking exhausted in a way.

“Ginny?”

“Tell me you went through that hell, please?” Ginny moaned.

“What hell?”

“Clothes shopping with Daphne and Astoria.”

“This past Sunday and Monday they managed to drag Luna, Dora and me with them,” Hermione chuckled.

“They take you to every witch’s store in that town?”

“Probably not,” Hermione said, “just all the good ones.”

“I don’t have a clue how I’m going to need all that they got me.”

“You might not,” Hermione smiled. “But don’t be surprised if you do.”

“And we must have filled the car with bags!”

“Well, at least you won’t be able to say you have nothing to wear.”

Ginny chuckled. “I now have more clothes than ever. And a lot of it is still being made.”

“And I bet it all looks wonderful on you,” Hermione said. “Those two know how to shop.”

“I’m beat! I’m glad that’s over with.”

“For now,” Hermione said.

“Excuse me?”

“That trip was for your formal wear and your summer and fall wardrobes. In a few months, they’ll be dragging us out again for winter and spring. The good news is they are self adjusting so unless you want something else, you won’t need to go back for a bit. Was it really such a pain?”

“Actually, it was kind of fun. Just tiring.”

“It can be that,” Hermione said. “I’m waiting to hear Minerva and Mallory when they get back from their trip with those two.”

“They’ve avoided it?”

“So far, but Saturday they’ll get the Greengrass Treatment. Those two are trying to get Harry to go as well, but so far he’s managed to avoid it. Dora got him a decent wardrobe our first week here, but he could do with more. I’m trying to fit that into his schedule.”

“He’s gonna love you,” Ginny chuckled. “Daphne said the Elves might have been around to the Burrow?”

“You’re stuff, less your old clothes and school books are in boxes in your Common Room. Why?”

“I kind of said I’d let them look at my collection of Boy-Who-Lived books.”

“You have a ... you never showed me!”

“By the time you came by, I was a little embarrassed with it. It’s so fake. But, knowing the real Harry, they are kind of funny.”

“How many?”

“Well, I have them going back to when I was three. They were my favorite stories for a time and Mum used to ... do you think she was trying to set me up even then?”

“Wouldn’t put it past her,” Hermione said. “How many?”

“Over a hundred. Ron hated that I always got them, but since he didn’t like to read...”

“Milady?” Darda the Elf said, “Madam?”

The two young women looked at the Head Elf.

“His Lordship requests your presence in the Family Dining Room,” he finished before popping away.

“What’s this about?” Ginny asked.

Hermione could only shrug as she stood and the two headed for the stairs.



They found Harry and most of his other witches were already seated, all the witches looking a little confused and Harry looking grave. Daphne and Astoria were right behind them. Also present were the Weasleys and their Consorts and Concubines and Neville, Susan and Amber. The remaining Harry Girls took their seats, Hermione's beside Harry.

"What's wrong, Harry?" she asked.

"There have been some unanticipated reactions to our fun at Gringotts yesterday."

"Bad press?"

"That was anticipated," Harry sighed. "The Goblins liquidated the accounts of the thirty-four dead beats. Twenty-two of them had enough money to cover their default, if just barely. Twelve were then forced into asset liquidation. Three of those don't have enough property to avoid losing everything and one of those three is a ... interesting development."

"Oh?"

"Among the assets the Goblins need to liquidate from the estate of Lucius Malfoy are his three Concubines; including it seems one of the ones I planned to purchase on Monday."

"Who?"

"Stacey Campbell," Harry said placing a paper on the table. "This is title to her."

"I take it we're not called here about her," Hermione said. "It's the other two?"

"Among other things, but we need to deal with the other two first."

“We said we’d help you with your Concubine issues if you needed us to,” Fleur said with Bill nodding.

“Thanks,” Harry said sliding two other parchments to Bill. “Titles to the other two. We’ll need to claim them today or tomorrow, Bill.”

“How?”

“Well, unless you want to bind them here,” Harry said, “when you get home just touch your wand to the seals on the titles and they’ll be summoned to you. Do you know how to bind them?”

“I’m sure these miscreants do,” Bill said indicating his brothers, “but no.”

“Fortunately,” Hermione said, “we can give you something on that.” She waived her wand and said *Accio Three Copies Volume I Self-Updating Bonding Guides*. Three books were soon in her hand and she passed them to the three Weasley boys. “We’ve been working on these for a bit. It’s all about this place and our type of family. It includes a significant section on bonds and how to make them and such. It’s still a work in progress, but as we add to the master copy, all others will update as well. What you need to know is in the section on the Concubine Bond.”

“Thanks,” Bill said.

“So Bill,” Fred said.

“Who’d you get?”

“No one,” Harry said. “Not ‘til he coughs up two galleons.”

“Two galleons?” Fleur asked. “That’s all they cost?”

“No. But that’s all I’ll take for them to have a good home.”

“Oh.” Bill sent two gold coins across the table.

“What’d you get,” Fred said again.

“Says here Mary Howard, age eighteen, two years in service and Samantha Johnson, age seventeen, one year, both Muggle Borns.”

“There’s more, isn’t there?” Hermione asked.

“It seems Dumbledore is at least trying to pay me back,” Harry said. “He’s liquidating assets.” Harry said handing Hermione a list. “That’s a list of new names up for Auction on Monday. They were added just before the absolute final deadline. Twenty-seven Muggle Born witches, all of whom are Hogwarts students. Seems he’s got me a bit over a barrel.”

“How?” a few voices asked.

“From Remus, I learned he’s in the trade and has access to inside information. He may not know who the buyer is, but he probably knows that someone has places some very high bids on this year’s new ‘crop’ of witches. For those of you who don’t know, I am buying every new concubine available for purchase at Monday’s Auction. They usually sell for five hundred or less. I’ve placed blind bids on the lot of them at two thousand a head. If Dumbledore found that out, he can make a cool fifty-four thousand with these new ones and there’s no way I can cry foul.”

“Why not?” Bill asked.

“Because I can’t let them go. It’s just wrong. I also won’t underbid myself. That might encourage someone to seriously try and bid against my agent. And as I placed no restrictions on how Dumbledore came up with the money to pay me back for what he stole, he can do what he wants legally.”

“Can you afford that?” Fleur asked.

“Even with expenses and such, my accounts will increase by far more than that this year. I’m spending income I don’t need. But my other problem is I really don’t have room for them. Or maybe I just don’t want my girls to suffer from such an increase in my attentions. Eighteen Concubines is going to be problems enough as it is.”

“We’re in,” George said.

“We are?” Angelina asked.

“You heard the girls’ stories about what life is like for most women like them,” George said. “Could you really look yourself in the mirror knowing you could have at least helped them have something better?”

“Same terms as Shelly and Ellen?” she asked.

George nodded. “Salaries if they work in the business. Education as far as they want and can handle, all that. And the other bonds if they ask. You know you are always first, Love.”

“Fine,” Angelina said. “But you’re going to need one huge house or lots of smaller ones and ...”

“I will provide that,” Harry said. “My contribution to the cause.”

“What do you mean, Harry?” Hermione asked.

“The lake where the guest hotel is being built has a lot of land. More than enough for a few large houses for large and unorthodox families. Adding those to my annual costs will cut into profits, but I won’t go into the red.”

“You’ve already looked into that?”

Harry nodded. “And stipends for furnishings and clothes as needed. If all three of you agree, that’s nine women per family. You can decide

who gets who however you like. My only condition is there are four sets of sisters and I don't want to see them split up."

"As I said, we're in," George said.

"We said we'd help," Bill added.

There was a pause as Fred and Alicia looked at each other before nodding. "Count us in too," Fred said.

"So," George said, "what are we looking at?"

"By House," Harry said, "it's seven Gryffindors, eleven Hufflepuffs, and nine Ravenclaws. No Slytherins obviously. By Year three would be starting Seventh Year, one Sixth..."

"Who?" Hermione asked.

"Mandy Brocklehurst from Ravenclaw," Harry replied, "seven Fifth Years, nine Fourth Years and seven Third Years. Minerva has seen the list. Between what I am already committed to buying or already have, this is probably every Muggle Born witch attending Hogwarts who is over the bonding age and not otherwise bound."

"I am so glad we're shot of that place," Susan said with disgust in her voice.

"Well said," Neville agreed. "Harry? Why are we here? None of these girls are becoming Longbottoms."

"Had Bill, Fred and George not agrees, you might have been," Harry shrugged. "But regardless, we needed to discuss how we go about bringing them all here. There are too many to bring all at once. All told, I am buying fifty-one young women come Monday, or at least I am buying the rights to them. All but six are current Hogwarts students, by the way. That would be impractical in the extreme. Add to it the fact that most of these young women are probably going to get even less warning about what is about to become of them than Daphne and Astoria did, less than Ginny even, and that most of them

probably have no idea that something like this could happen in our world and Hermione and I think it's important they be eased in to some extent."

"What are you talking about?" Verity asked. "We just found ourselves in a room with some man telling us we were his and getting to it. The bond prevents any reaction."

"Not true," Daphne said. "Bonding may prevent any outward reaction, but unless it's immediate, you still feel fear, confusion, betrayal and such. Moreover, as I'm sure you know, the real you is still in there somewhere. Harry could have suppressed Daphne Greengrass, but I'd still be in here watching. He didn't so I'm not locked away."

Verity nodded. "Fred let the real me out after years as well. It was easy to love him for that alone. But can't you just bond then do it?"

"I suppose," Daphne said. "But Harry let us get used to the idea a little and let us know before we bonded just what to expect. We knew he would never hurt us and would try his best to give us something close to the life we should have had. We knew that before anything else happened. We had been told what happens with most concubines and considering who we thought had bought us, we expected the worst. We expected to be sent to Hell and instead found a Heaven."

"We were mostly ourselves during the Bonding," Astoria said. "It made the experience better, I think. All the bond did was keep us from running away or something. But, as we knew what happened and that Harry was doing his best for us under difficult circumstances and that he really did care about us in a way, the bonding was a pleasant experience for my sister and I."

"Harry did the same for me," Ginny said. "The only down side is I might have enjoyed it too much. I know I enjoyed it!"

"Too much?" Bill asked.

“I’ve been walking funny all day,” Ginny said, “and don’t look at Harry that way!” she added in anger. “It’s my fault. Once I was bonded, he didn’t tell me to do it four more times! He didn’t ask me too either! I chose to and was allowed to and I’m paying the price for wanting more than I could handle!”

“So how would that work?” Verity asked.

“We’ll bring them here in small groups, one or two for each household. Two only if they are sisters. Because of the nature of the titles, they will arrive here at the Manor. They will be met by a group of experienced concubines for their orientation. Minerva will be one. Most of the girls were her students so that may help. Mallory will be here regarding health issues...”

“And with plenty of calming draught,” Mallory added.

“And there will be one other witch from the other households, preferably ones that know firsthand what could have happened to them. I can assume Amber is your house selection, Neville?”

Neville nodded. “Might change once Clearwater is here. Depends on whether she was worse off or not I guess.”

“Unless she was a whore lying in a brothel I doubt it,” Amber said. “While my life with House Longbottom was nice and is now wonderful, my start as a concubine was not pleasant.”

The Weasleys were in whispered conversations with their Consorts and Concubines for a moment.

“Verity will be ours,” Alicia said.

“Shelly,” George added.

“Fleur for now,” Bill said. “We’ll see if either of these two are up to it,” he added indicating the two titles in front of him.

“Anyone else?” Fleur asked.

“That’s up to each household,” Harry said. “I think we should let the primary group work out how to break all this to the new arrivals.”

“When will they arrive?” Neville asked.

“First – er – shipment will be on Monday as soon as we have the titles back from the Auction,” Harry said. “Thereafter, we will transport on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, excluding my Birthday of course, until all of them are here. Whether you bond with them the day they arrive is up to you. Once they are done with – er – orientation, the house representatives will bring them to where they need to be for, well, whatever happens next.”

“Which means the Library here is off limits on those days,” Hermione added.

“Why’s that?” Alicia asked. She had spent most of the day there.

“If you must know,” Hermione said, “I gave myself to Harry, lost my virginity and became his Consort on a couch in that Library my first afternoon here. Since then, all of Harry’s Concubines and Luna have or will be bound to him there.”

“Knowing how special it was for Hermione,” Daphne added, “and that we all share that with her and each other is kind of special. Story and I were told that before we went through the rite.”

“It made it easier for us,” Astoria said. “It told us we were considered the same as all the others, including Harry’s Consort. We didn’t feel as ... I don’t know ...”

“Ruined?” Verity offered.

“For lack of a better word.”



“Hermione told us about that when we arrived,” Neville said. “I guess it made sense to Susan and I, particularly after we learned that our Bonding Place, beneath an oak tree by a lake on my family’s estate, has been used for Bonding by my ancestors for the last nine generation. I forgot to ask you, Amber. Where did you and Dad...”

“Your Mum said you Longbottom boys have a thing about oak trees and lakes,” Amber giggled. “And I liked your new one as well.”

“We’ll probably need a tent available by our tree, Neville,” Susan said, “in case of bad weather.”

“Good idea,” Neville chuckled. “Don’t fancy a go in the rain really.”

“How long will this take,” Fleur asked.

“If we begin this Monday,” Harry replied, “we can have them all here by mid-August. Things may be a little cramped for us all for a bit, but I have been assured that Longbottom and Black House will be substantially complete by the beginning of September and, if I get on it first thing tomorrow, the three Weasley homes will be ready not later than mid-September.”

“I like that idea,” Daphne said. “Gives us a whole weekend to take our new friends shopping.”

“Are you trying to scare them away?” Ginny quipped.

“What’s this?” Bill asked.

“Daphne and Story took me into to town to shop for my new wardrobe,” Ginny said with a smile. “We must have been to a thousand stores...”

“She exaggerates,” Daphne said.

“There aren’t anywhere near that many,” Astoria added.

“And even then, we only took her to the good ones.”

“Well, the others are good as well,” Daphne said. “But as Ginny is now bound to the Duke...”

“She can’t wear just any old outfit now, can she?” Astoria said.

“They’ve become our designated fashion shoppers,” Hermione said. “I never thought much about it before. Neither did Luna. But we all want to look good for Harry in public, so we all have or will be run through the Greengrass wringer so we all can look good for Harry, this Country and all that.”

“That reminds me,” Daphne said, “as Senior Attendant to Her Highness, Duchess Hermione, I have made arrangements with the various shops in Pottersport for the lot of you. As close, personal friends of His Highness the Duke, you can expect to be invited to various functions he will be expected to either attend or host. I have here a list of the types or styles of attire you will need to acquire for the men, and women including Concubines. There will be State Dinners on occasion, State Balls – the next one will be this Sunday for the Investiture of our new Countess and the Knighting of Neville, Luna and Ginny...”

“What?” a few voices asked.

“It will be not unlike Harry’s investiture and the Knighting of our Harry, Lady Hermione, Lord Mayor Lupin and Dora. Great place for pictures! Anyway, there will also be Evening Formal, Evening Informal and Garden Party attire. You each have accounts for one suit per man – including you, Dad, Neville – and three dresses or gowns, as appropriate, for each of your ladies – and your Mum, Neville – and shoes of course. Accessories are up to you.”

“Blimey!” Fred said.

“What have we gotten into?” George finished.

“Well,” Angelina added, “I for one think you’ll look dashing, George. Can we go tomorrow?”

“I suppose,” George said getting a hug.

“It’s not like we have anything better to do,” Fred added, getting a gentle smack from Alicia before she hugged him.

THURSDAY, JULY 11th, 1996 –MALFOY MANOR, U.K.

Stacey Campbell sat at the small, wooden table eating her soup. With her were Mary and Sam (short for Samantha), although the three of them only had names in this room. Here was where they slept and ate and waited. It was primitive. They each had a small cot for sleeping and a wooden stool to sit upon. There was a sink, toilet and shower and little or nothing else. She had had a writing table once, but once she had taken her O.W.L.s it was removed, as was her one real set of clothes that she had only worn to school, as was her wand.

Outside this dungeon, for there was no other word for where she lived goodness knows how many years; she had no need for a name or anything else. Out there, she was to respond to “Bitch,” “Slut,” or “Whore.” Out there, she was a filthy Mudblood and all she was good for was “entertainments.” She had not worn clothing of any kind in ages it seemed. There was no need. When called, she would leave the room and suck and fuck whomever she was told for as long as her services were required. Then she would return here to await her next time. She no longer even knew what day or year it was. It really did not matter.

Life as she knew of it ended for her in late July of 1993. She was fourteen years old. Before this place, she lived with her real family outside of London. She had two loving parents who had decent jobs. She had a younger brother and sister who, while annoying at times, were very important to her as well. In the summer of 1990, she learned that the strange things that occasionally happened were due, at least in part, because she was a witch. A nice lady from an exclusive school came to tell her about that and magic and gave her a letter inviting her to attend a school for children like her called St.

George's. Her parents were both thrilled and relieved. They admitted to her later that they were afraid they had been going mental, but it all made sense now and they were proud of her and she should make them proud by becoming the best witch she could be. Her little brother and sister were pleased as well. Deep down, Stacey was certain they were magical children too and one day they would all be off to this school together. After all, her last year would begin in 1996 when the youngest Campbell was twelve. She had so looked forward to that day.

She came home on Holiday breaks and told the family all about school, the people she had met and what she was learning. She was a good student and eager to learn all she could. In July of 1993, she was on her summer holiday from school. Her brother Richard was eleven and had received his letter too! They had a huge party for him. It was going to be so wonderful. And the next day, she was here and her life ended.

She did not know how she got here, but knew it was through some kind of magic. She arrived in this very room to see two other girls sitting naked on two of the cots and a tall, evil looking man with long, almost silvery blonde hair. He told her that in addition to being a worthless, filthy Mudblood whore, she was now his slave. She remembered him saying it was the one law in this land he could live with, as it kept filth like her from breeding and polluting the population. She couldn't say anything or even run away and the two other girls just sat there doing and saying nothing as the man proceeded to order her out of her clothes and perform all sorts of disgusting things to him and she could not resist. She began to hate magic, for she was sure that was why he could violate her in every way imaginable and she could not even whimper in protest. To her, the man's name was "Master." She knew he had another name, a strange name, but it did not matter. It never did. She was not human to him and he was not human to her.

The vile man was most put out that he had to allow her to return to school. He clearly felt magical education was wasted on "Mudbloods," but the law required it until she had taken her O.W.L.s. Not that it mattered, really. He spent days, maybe weeks "training" her in her new role as a whore. She would service him and his guests in any

way they desired. No sexual act was beneath her and most were quite foul, in her opinion. Her training occurred in this very room. It was all she saw of the world for a long time it seemed. The other two girls had been there a while and had been through it all as well. Their names were Verity and Danielle and their names only mattered when they were alone in this room. She learned that she had replaced an older girl whose real name neither of them had ever learned. Neither of the girls knew what happened to Shelly, who had been here longer than they had. All they knew is that one day she was gone and Stacey was here.

When "Master" had determined her suitably broken, compliant and loose, she found out what life would really be like. She and the other two girls dreaded the door. When it opened, they would be led out to service men and women, or entertain them at meals by having sex with each other while the diners ate. The servicing and entertainment always lasted for hours and she had no idea how many times she had been violated. But the magic kept her from doing anything to stop it.

She found this out not long after she "entered Service." She was returned to a magic school that fall. It was not St. George's. It was called St. Andrew's and she was told her family and transferred her there. She wanted to tell anyone at the school what had and what was happening to her, but for some reason she could not. The abused whore was suppressed by the vile magic, and Stacey was all anyone outside her hell saw. This Stacey worked hard at school, but did not do as well as before. She was allowed but one hour a day for homework, not nearly enough to remain atop her classes. The rest of her time was spent in service. As many of the students at St. Andrew's lived at home, no one found it odd that she showed up just before first bell and left immediately after her last class. As she was new, no one found it odd that she had no real friends and was never invited to parties or anything else outside of school.

Prior to returning to school, the other two girls she lived with had never spoken as far as she could recall. It seemed that changed when they realized she was getting "outside." Unlike her, their hell began the summer after their O.W.L.s and they had never seen anything since. They only knew what year it was when a "new girl"

arrived. The rest of the outside life, including days and dates, were unknowns. They thirsted for any information and, when they were alone, they talked and talked. They were both Muggle Borns like her. Verity had been here the longest. She arrived in the summer of 1991. The two girls who were here when she arrived were gone now. She had no idea what happened to them and never knew their real names. Danielle arrived the next summer just after another girl disappeared. Now Stacey was here. They told stories about their lives before all this. There really was no need to talk about what happened to them when they got here.

During the summer break after her Fourth Year of school and first year in this hell, Verity disappeared and Mary arrived. She too had just taken her O.W.L.s when this happened. Stacey and Danielle sat quietly on their cots whilst their new cell mate was raped and sexually abused in every possible way by their Master. They really couldn't talk to the poor girl as when Master was done with her for the day, they were called from the room for hours of sexual entertainments. It wasn't until Stacey began her Fifth Year at school when they learned about Mary. Again, Stacey was the source for any information about "outside."

Practically as soon as she finished her last O.W.L. exam, she was back here. This time, her one set of clothes, writing desk, books and wand were taken from her. After all, Master had said, she would never need them again. Not long afterwards, Danielle disappeared and Samantha arrived and it started all over again for the new girl. This time, however, it was a little different. When they finally had time alone, after Sam was in service, they talked. Stacey told Sam all about her life and all the stories she could remember from Verity and Danielle. Mary talked too. They all now knew they had three years here. After that, it was anyone's guess as to what happened, but anything was better than this. They all knew Stacey would be the next to disappear. It was only a matter of time. But they were friends and the two newer girls promised Stacey that the stories from her and the others would be passed on to newer ones so that they would not be forgotten.

Stacey was eating what passed for her dinner with Mary and Sam. Something had changed and none of them really wanted to guess

what. Not long after Sam entered service, the entertainments had increased. There were more who demanded entertainment and they went on almost without break. The girls were given two days a week, they were told, to rest before it all started again so they would be “fresh as filth such as you can be.” It all had suddenly stopped some time ago. They had not seen or heard anything in what seemed like ages. None of them wanted to guess what had happened and each was secretly thankful that someone had remembered they needed to eat. The food was the only way they knew that time was still passing.

Stacey felt something and looked up with a gasp. Mary and Sam looked at her in shock.

“Stacey!” Sam said. “You’re collar! It’s gone!”

Stacey reached for her neck. The black collar had appeared the day she first entered this hell. So far as she knew, only the other girls here could see it. Since her stuff was taken away after her O.W.L.s, it was all she wore and all that was hers in this world.

“Goodbye Stacey my friend,” Mary said sadly with tears beginning to fall just as everything faded from Stacey’s view.

THURSDAY, JULY 11th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Bill had left Fleur with his brothers and their women. That group was going to split the twenty-seven girls Dumbledore had just added to the Auction into three groups of nine. Bill knew his wife would make sure the division would be fair. He had two other witches to worry about right now. He stood with Harry and some of Harry’s women in a large sitting room elsewhere on the First Floor. Hermione was there as one of the girl’s would be a Potter and she was the Potter Consort. Also present was Minerva, because if anyone could get these girls to open up and understand what was happening, Harry and Bill both agreed she could. Mallory was there in her role as a Healer. Finally, as these girls belonged to Lucius Malfoy, Dora was there. They might know things about Malfoy and the Death Eaters that could be useful.

Harry placed his wand to the seal on the Title he held in his hand. Moments later, a naked young woman stood before him with a bewildered expression on her face. She made no attempt to cover herself. She was about two inches shorter than Harry, with deep blue eyes and long, black hair and pale skin. Harry figured her for a four fifths, meaning her breasts appeared to be about four fifths the size of Hermione's against which all breasts were measured in his mind.

"Get her something to wear," he said, "a bathrobe or something."

Stacey soon found herself wearing a warm, white, long terry cloth robe. It was the first clothing she had worn in goodness knows how long and it felt wonderful against her skin. Still, this sick new twist frightened her. Who were these people and what were they playing at?

Before her stood a young man, perhaps her age although she no longer knew what that was. He was taller than her with short black hair and glasses behind which were amazing green eyes. They were the most gentle eyes she had seen in a long, long time. She barely registered the others, except noting that they were all well dressed and not one of them had those vile, black hooded wizard robes that she was used to seeing.

"What is your name," Harry asked gently even though he knew the answer.

"I answer to 'whore,' 'slut,' 'bitch'," she began.

"I didn't ask you that," Harry said more firmly. "You were born with a name, were you not?"

She nodded. "But filthy Mudbloods don't deserve..." she began.

"Don't say that!" the young woman standing next to the young man said. "Don't ever say that!"



“You are a witch and a woman,” the young man said in a gentle tone. “Anyone who says otherwise isn’t fit to speak to you. Now what is your name?”

No one had cared about that in ages, Stacey thought. Just those girls who were with me. “Stacey,” she said. “M-my name is Stacey Campbell.”

“My name is Harry,” the young man said. “It is the only title I will willingly answer to. Do you know where you were just before?”

“N-no,” she whimpered.

“How long were you there?”

She shrugged her shoulders. “Don’t know. I – I don’t even know how I got there. But that happened in July of 1993. I was only fourteen!”

“You’re a First Generation Witch?” Harry asked.

The girl looked confused.

“Muggle Born?”

It had been a long time since she had heard that term. She nodded. “We all were,” she added. “That’s what happens to us they said. That’s why we deserved whatever they did to us.”

“They beat you?”

“No. Master did on occasion, but not too bad. He wouldn’t let the others. Didn’t want them ruining valuable property.”

“Sex slave?”

“I guess.”

“Did you do anything of a non-sexual nature?”

“I was allowed to go to school until I took my O.W.L.s,” she said. “But otherwise I waited in the cell until someone outside the door wanted sex.”

“How often was that?”

“Until recently, almost every day. We’d get called and service several men each ... and women. We were kept at it until we collapsed from exhaustion sometimes. Next time we woke up, same thing.”

“Why were you naked just now?”

She could not believe the question. “We’re not deserving of clothes. I only wore them to school. I was naked all the rest of the time.”

“Where’s your wand?”

“Don’t know. Once I finished my O.W.L.s I was told I would never need it again.”

“Bill?” Harry said turning to a tall man with long red hair pulled into a ponytail, “let’s get the others here.” There was steel in his tone.

The older man placed his wand on a parchment and Stacey saw a form materialize in front of her. Although she only could see the back, she recognized the dirty blond hair of her friend Mary. Mary was in robes before she even had a chance to speak.

Stacey heard a gasp. She saw a tall woman, much older than the rest. “As I live and breathe,” the woman said. “Mary Howard I presume?”

“P-p-professor McGonagall?” Stacey heard Mary said. “Is this Hogwarts?”

The woman shook her head. “Better,” she said. She then apparently spoke with the others in the room. “She was in Ravenclaw the same year as Bill’s brothers. Never returned after Fifth Year.”

“I’m Bill,” the tall man said to Mary. “Please have a seat.”

Mary turned and saw Stacey. “Stacey?” Stacey nodded and Mary sat next to her, looking even more confused than Stacey was. Within the next five minutes, another young witch dressed in a matching white bathrobe joined them. It was their other friend Sam.

The young man named Harry looked at a form. “Stacey Campbell,” he said reading, “age seventeen...”

“I’m that young?” she asked rhetorically and gasped expecting to be hit for speaking. No blow ever came.

“Started St. George’s in 1990,” Harry continued. “Bonded summer of ’93 and transferred to St. Andrew’s.”

“They do that,” another older woman said, “when they remove you. Unless they let you live at home, they change your school if you haven’t sat for your O.W.L.s. That’s why I finished at Hogwarts.”

“Makes it easier for their women to disappear,” McGonagall nodded. “The schools are sufficiently isolated from one another that a parent might take years to learn of the transfer. By then, the girls are done and beyond reach.”

“I wasn’t pulled from home,” another woman said. “Lived with my folks until after I left school. Then again, they knew what I was – what I am.”

“Do you know how you became what you were?” the young man named Harry asked Stacey.

The “were” struck her. “N-no. I was in my bedroom a-at home and then I was there and it was all over for me,” she said starting to cry and realizing something had changed for the better. “Why did this happen to me? What did I do?”

“Nothing,” Harry said. “All you did was be born into a sick world. No one deserves what happened to you, Stacey. None of you deserved it. Well, aside from the sick bastard who did this, no one does.” He turned to the others. “I never should have left the bastard to the Goblins.”

“Harry,” Minerva said, “death by them except in battle is said to be slow and incredibly painful.”

“Good to know the bastard will suffer,” Harry grunted.

“This is all so vile,” Hermione said.

“When one person is placed in a position of authority and trust over another,” Minerva said, “they come into a position where they can abuse that trust. Many do not. The Concubine Bond is merely one such position. A parent or guardian has that position over the child, a teacher has that position over a student. Can you honestly say you are not aware of similar – if not as extreme – abuses?”

“No,” Hermione replied.

“As potentially repugnant as the Concubine Bond is, it has a purpose and can be very beneficial to the concubine. Originally, it was employed to keep societal magic alive by ensuring witches remained part of our world. Harry practices the custom of that time, treating all of his women with the love and respect they deserve as people regardless of how it was they came into his life. Unfortunately, the bond can be perverted and in the hands of a Pureblood Supremacist ... well, Miss Stacey here is living testament to just how perverted it can become.”

“C-concubine bond?” Stacey asked.

“It’s a magical bond between a witch and wizard,” the young woman with curly brown hair said in reply. “One of two in our world. The other is the Consort Bond. Both bonds have existed for over a thousand years.”

“Are they different?” Stacey asked.

“In some ways and the same in others,” the woman said. “I am a Consort. Muggle Born like you, but unlike you I chose this of my own free will. My bond is reciprocal. My wizard is bound to me as well. Your bond is involuntary from your point of view and, unless modified – which it can be – is only binds you to him. Magic merely prevents him from killing you or allowing you to be killed. Anything else is apparently fair game.

“The Concubine Bond was created because our kind was dying out,” the woman continued. “There were far more witches than wizards, there still are. This was before they could easily detect Muggle Borns. Witches needed to remain in the magical world to keep it going as mothers for the next generation. If they left and married into the Muggle world, they were lost to us, as were their children usually. The bonds were created so that a witch who did not have nor could find a magical husband would still be bound to a wizard to bear and raise magical children. Long after the bonds were in common use, the notion of blood purity arose. Those wizards have since perverted the bond to their own view of things creating a virtual slave class that was never intended.

“More open minded wizards created the Consort Bond to protect at least some of us from your fate as once you are magically bonded, no one can break the bond. The problem is the Consort Bond is mutual. It creates, enhances and maintains a very beneficial and supportive relationship between the witch and wizard, but the two must want that or it cannot take hold. Moreover, it must be entered into before the witch is bound in any other way to a wizard either as wife or Concubine. The law protects the former bond, magic the later. Unless you married or became a Consort before you could be sold as a Concubine (for that is how it works), you become one. The majority of Muggle Born witches are Concubines because none of us had family as magical guardians to prevent that. Our guardian was a wizard, one who was either a Pureblood or a traditionalist and considers us as little more than a commodity of some monetary value to him.”

“That’s not to say,” another woman said, “that those of us whose fathers were wizards and our magical guardians would never sell us. We can be as well. But there is at least that family thing that makes them less inclined to do so. My father was forced to sell me before I was even born.”

“So you couldn’t avoid it?” Mary asked.

The woman shrugged. “It was possible. I could have become a Consort which would have prevented me from being bound as a Concubine. But as I was not even thirteen when I was bound, it was not a practical option.”

“So you’re a sex slave too?”

The woman shook her head. “Sexual relations with your Binder are but a small part of what should be. We were intended to be bound so that our hearts, minds and magic would enhance our new family. Services of a more physical nature were never intended as the sole basis or rationale for the bond. It was perverted into that by the Pureblood elites who believe those of us with less than Pureblood are of no account whatsoever. But there are some Binders who are not such fools and who see all the benefits both to them and their women that the Bond can offer, not just in the bedroom.”

“Would you say I am a sex slave, Miss Howard?” Minerva asked her former student.

“You’re a... You’re like us?”

“I have been a Concubine since before my Fourth Year at Hogwarts. Fifty-three years now. But I have never been a slave of any description. My Binders saw more in me than that.”

“But you still had sex with them...”

“I was and am intimate with them,” Minerva nodded. “Intimacy and sex may look the same but they are vastly different. I share with my wizard and he shares himself with me. He takes nothing from me. He

gives of himself and I give back, the way it should be between a man and a woman. You were most unfortunate to be bound to a man who has never known or cared for love, not even for what he might have had from his own wife – and yes he did have one.”

“So what happens to us now?” Samantha asked. “Are we free? Can we go home?”

The dark haired young man’s shoulders slumped just a bit and he sighed. “The unfortunate thing about magical bonds is that they cannot be broken,” he said. “Once you became concubines, you became them for life.”

“S-so w-we have to g-go back?” Mary whimpered.

“No,” he replied gently. “You will never go back to where and what you were. Concubines are somewhat like property. While the bond cannot be broken, it can be transferred and yours has been.”

“How?” she asked.

“To whom?” Stacey asked.

“Your former ... whatever that cretin was owed me a lot of money. He couldn’t pay so his property was confiscated and set to be liquidated. That included the three of you. Had I done nothing, you three would be sold at auction in a few days. You would not know of it until you were transferred to your new wizard. However, when I was informed of this, I intervened. I will not let that happen and risk you’re falling into a similar situation, so I took Title to the three of you and brought you here. It is my duty to find you good homes with wizards who will treat you with the love and respect you deserve. You will be allowed to choose just how far you can go in your lives and just what you can do.”

“But our educations,” Mary began.

“Will resume,” Harry said. “Stacey?”

The girl could only nod in reply.

“You were set for auction anyway. Apparently your former – er – employer only keeps a Concubine for three years before selling them and getting a new one. I knew nothing about you, but had a bid on you anyway, a rather substantial bid.”

“Why?”

“Several reasons. Suffices to say I think you and the others like you who are up for sale all deserve a life, so I’m buying the lot of you who are about your age or younger. So you will join Minerva, Mallory and Dora,” he said indicating the three older women, “as an honored part of my family.”

“And us?” Samantha asked.

“My friend Bill here is willing to offer you two a home and family. Admittedly, you really don’t have a choice, but we’d like to think you would prefer this.”

“We can’t really go home?” Mary asked.

Harry shook his head. “Your bond prevents that to a degree. You would never be able to tell them anything. More than that, there is a war going on there now. Muggle Borns are not safe there, assuming anyone is at all. You will be safe here.”

“What about our families?” Stacey asked. “What point is it to be safe if they’re not?”

“I’m sure they would rather like to think you three are safe,” Harry said. “That being said, things may change.”

“What?”

“Later,” Harry said. “For now, I will leave you with these ladies. Mallory is a Healer and will check you out; the others will ask you



questions and answer yours. In a couple of hours, you will join our families for dinner.”

With that, the two men and young woman left the three bewildered witches. But they saw and heard the young man named Harry speaking to the young woman who was probably his Consort. “Been here not even three weeks,” he said. “Why is it every day is weirder than the one before?”

“Because you’re Harry Potter, Love of mine,” she said, “The-Boy-Who’s-Weird.”

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew’s, SP – St. Patrick’s, SD – St. David’s.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

8. Ginevra Molly Weasley, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.1. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

2. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

3. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.1. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

2. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

3. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE: UNSUSPECTING

FRIDAY, JULY 12th, 1996 – Number 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging, Surry, U.K.

“Do you think I should pack bed linens, Vernon?” Petunia Dursley asked as she packed yet another suitcase.

“They said the temporary place is fully furnished and if not to our liking it’s walking distance from the shops. The movers will pack the rest and deliver it once our permanent housing is ready.”

“But...”

“Sod the bed linens, Petunia! Just the ruddy clothes.”

“I still don’t understand why we have to move on such short notice and where is this place?”

Vernon had to admit, he had not given his wife much of an explanation. He was only told two days ago and was a bit steamed when he got home. He let out a sigh.

“The plant manager called me into a meeting day before yesterday,” Vernon said. “The Company President was there and all that. They made my options quite clear. The Company’s got plants both here and abroad and I know if I want to move up, I have to make Plant Manager. Much as I was certain I’d get the posting when Mannings retired ... well, he hasn’t yet. There’s an opening for a plant manager at a new plant they’re building overseas. They basically told me it was that job, or I stay a production manager until I retire and I can forget about any raises between now and then aside from cost of living adjustments. My third option was to quit and kiss off a significant part of my pension plan as that part hasn’t vested yet. Basically, if we want to get ahead, this is my only choice.”

“But overseas Vernon?”

“I was told they speak English there. It’s the ‘native’ tongue.”

“Still, so are the Americans but who would want to move there?”

“If we stay here, we’re either stuck or I’m looking for work.”

“But Vernon, what about the boy?”

“He scampered, Petunia! The ruddy freak ran off the day he got back, ungrateful bastard. Good riddance. We’re finally shot of him!”

“That’s not what I meant. His types want him here! With us!”

“All the more reason to leave the country while we can! Do you really want the little brat to come back?”

“No. But...”

“But nothing! We haven’t seen any of him in weeks and nothing of his lot as well. I say we take advantage of this and we’ll be free of him and his freaky kind for good!”

“So what do you know about this place?”

“Aside from what they told me at work, not much. Never heard of it. I was assured they have good relations with Her Majesty’s Government and have for hundreds of years. There was an R.A.F. base there during the War. They’ve got God awful travel restrictions. No tourist visas. No scheduled air service. Basically, once we’re there, we’re there...”

“And Dudley’s school?”

Vernon growled. “If Dudley stays here for school, we won’t see him until I get promoted back to Britain. He’d have to stay here, Petunia. Travel restrictions. I was told they have good schools there, better than the Comprehensives here and if he finishes there, he can get one of their passports for travel. His British Passport is of no use unless their government invites him in.”

“But you were so looking forward to his finishing Smeltings.”

“Petunia, he couldn’t even come for the Holidays. I’ll be so busy I doubt I’d have time to leave for a few years and you can’t travel back on your Passport. That place is really serious about keeping out undesirable elements, unlike our flaming Liberal government. And if he’d stay, where would he spend the Holidays? He can’t stand Marge and that Polkiss family is the wrong sort...”

“I’m sorry Vernon,” Petunia said softly, “I know how much it meant for you for Dudders to finish from the same school you did.”

“Bloody company sends me half ‘round the world...” Vernon muttered.

“Half way around the world? Is that where we’re going?”

“Sorry Petunia. I really don’t know. All I know it’s an island somewhere. Couldn’t even find it on a map, but as I don’t even know where to begin to look... Speak English or not, I just hope it’s not some Third World cesspool. Do you think we should have updated our shots?”

“You don’t think it’s that bad, do you? Surely if we needed shots they would have told you?”

“I have no bloody idea what to think, except as much as our government can sod off about everything, at least this is home! I was almost tempted to tell the boss to bugger off with this promotion, Petunia. Almost. But it’s an extra ten thousand a year, far more than any raise I could expect. If I get that plant up and running like no one’s business, that’s sure to be a feather in my cap going down the road. But these travel restrictions and such? It’s weird is all. I only found a handful of references to the place at all, none of which tell me much of anything! Place doesn’t even have its own website! No maps, brochures nothing like that online. Only thing I found was a reference regarding the R.A.F. during the War and a crackpot

conspiracy theory site that thinks maybe that's where the Templar gold got off to. Strange, is all I'm saying, Petunia."

"I think I'm finished packing," Petunia said. "I'll check on Dudders."

"I'll lug this stuff down to the living room. At least whoever these people are have the decency to run us to the airport. I sure as hell wouldn't want to pay for leaving our car there for God knows how many years."

Forty-five minutes later all of the Durlseys packed luggage was in their living room. They were expecting someone from Grunnings and this other country to arrive at any minute. Dudley had only recently stopped complaining about having to leave all his good stuff for the movers and how he needed that stuff.

"Why would you want to sit at a computer all day when there are beaches with topless native girls?" Vernon asked.

That stopped the whining.

"Vernon?"

"No idea. Made it up. But it shut him up."

A knock at the door brought them back to reality. Vernon rose from his chair to answer it.

"Ah Dursely!" a voice boomed. "So you ready to go?"

"Mr. Dawkins," Vernon said. The man was a few steps above him in the Company. "I suppose we are. Such short notice..."

"Round peg, round hole," Dawkins said. "Posting came up! Huge up side and your name topped the list. You know how it works to refuse promotion. But that's neither here nor there. We're certain you'll do a bang up job for us! Right then, this is Mr. Shackelbolt with their Foreign Ministry," Dawkins said introducing a tall, black man of the type Vernon would ordinarily call "Darkie" but for the fact this man's

suit probably cost as much as Vernon's car. "And this is Mr. Weasley from their Board of Trade," he added indicating another tall man in his twenties with long, red hair in a ponytail. In Vernon's day there were standards of dress and while the man's suit was impeccable, proper government officials, in Vernon's opinion, did not have long hair. "Right then," Dawkins said, "I'll leave you to it. And Vernon?"

"Yes Mr. Dawkins?"

"Don't screw this up," he said in an almost threatening tone. "Their Head of State sits on the Board of several large Holding Companies if he does not own them outright. One of them owns Grunnings!"

Vernon gulped as Mr. Dawkins left.

"Right then," Kingsley said. "Time waits for no man. We have a car parked out front."

The two men turned and left the house. Vernon frowned as it was obvious he was expected to haul all their luggage to the car. "Dudley," Vernon snapped. "Grab a couple of suitcases!"

"Dad?"

"Do it boy!" Vernon said picking up as many as he could carry.

Dudley grumbled as he picked up a couple of large suit cases and followed his father out to the car. A year ago he would have grumbled about his Cousin not being there, but that was last year. He did wonder what happened to Harry. Parked out front was a large, fancy car which would be sure to turn the heads of their nosey neighbors. The boot was open and waiting, but no one was waiting to help. The two men were talking to the driver of a large lorry which had parked behind the car. Vernon was tempted to demand help, but he had been told not to antagonize these people. Grumbling, he began to stuff a suitcase into the boot. While it was large, he doubted it could hold all their luggage. After about twenty minutes of hauling luggage, to Vernon's surprise somehow it all fit, although only just barely.

“Right then,” the younger man said, “all set?”

Vernon nodded as the man opened the door to the limo. Vernon climbed in followed by his wife and son and sat in the back seat facing forward.

“Wicked,” Dudley commented looking at the interior of the car. The other two men took seats on a bench along either side of the car.

“Could I offer you or your wife a libation?” the man from the Foreign Office asked. “Scotch? Champagne perhaps?”

“Scotch,” Vernon said. His wife indicated she was not interested. Dudley was disappointed that all he was allowed was a Coke as the car pulled away from Number Four.

The Dursleys never looked back. They never saw their furnishings floating into the back of the Lorry or noticed that it was but minutes behind them leaving behind a house barren of any evidence of occupancy. The Lorry turned the opposite direction from that of the Limo. Its destination was not an airport, but a containership terminal, for the back was in fact a small container for overseas shipment. Four hours later, the container containing the Durselys worldly possessions was lifted off the trailer and placed upon a stack to await its ship.

A week later, a small container ship made up to the quay. It would hardly catch anyone’s notice aside from the workers at the port. This ship was a regular, arriving about once a month without cargo and loading up with as many containers of cargo it could carry. The worker had no idea where it came from when it arrived or where it went when it set sail. Its name was the Windward Island and its stern said “Panama”. The Panamanian flag flew from a jackstaff at the stern, but that meant little. There were many ships under that flag that had never even been to Panama. It was a popular flag of convenience of the time with the world’s merchant marine fleets, although Liberia was still popular as well. The truth was the neither the Windward Island, its crew, nor its owners had ever been anywhere near the Central American country. A little over a week



after the Dursley's container arrived, the Windward Island was loaded, slipped its moorings and stood out to sea. Four days after setting sail from England, the Windward Island would make port and all of the containers were off loaded. Most were loaded immediately onto lorries or railcars for shipment to their final destinations. But as the Dursleys' container did not yet have a destination, it was moved to the storage yard while outbound containers were loaded onto the Windward Island.

"This isn't the way to Heathrow," Vernon complained. He knew they were heading west, away from that busy airport.

"We're not going to Heathrow," the dark skinned man from the Foreign Office of this mysterious country said. "Our airplane is at a more remote facility. My country takes its security very seriously and we prefer a field where we can control the security on the ground. As you may have been told, there is no scheduled air service. Best way to control immigration and prevent unwanted elements from entering really. All air transport is controlled by our government including who may embark."

"And the reason for this?" Vernon asked.

"We have the highest life expectancy in Europe. Our per capita income is easily twice that of Great Britain, a stable economy and a huge trade surplus. Such things attract unwanted immigration and unsavory elements. There are other reasons dating back centuries. We do not like unwanted and uninvited guests."

"You people take Pounds?" Vernon asked, not knowing what else to ask.

"It is our currency," the man replied.

"Oh?"

"Our country was once part of England, or at least it was under the English Crown. We gained our independence in the thirteenth century."

“Rebels?” Vernon almost seethed.

“Not hardly,” the man replied. “Our Duke at the time performed services to the Realm that your King found of value. To be honest, were it not for our Duke, your King John might well have lost his head. The reward for saving the monarchy was our independence from it. We are an island nation, so it’s not like the Crown really could have done much had we actually forced the issue. England would not be a major sea power for several hundred years and their attentions were to the East in Europe and, at that time, the Levant. We have remained loyal allies. Our last Duke was a fighter pilot in your R.A.F., fought in the Battle of Britain, North Africa, Sicily and Italy. Eighteen air-to-air victories during the Second World War, I believe. Knighted by George VI himself. One might argue we were the first true nation in the Commonwealth and our Duke is technically under your Queen, although we do not answer to your Parliament or Prime Minister, except through our respective diplomats.”

“Island nation?” Vernon asked. “The Channel Islands?”

“No sir,” the man replied. “The Duchy of Charenwell is to the southwest of the British Isles.”

“There’s nothing to the southwest,” Dudley said. “Just the Atlantic!”

“As I said, we take our security most seriously,” the man replied. “You will not find our islands on any map, yet mariners know to steer clear.”

“I find that hard to believe,” Vernon said.

The man shrugged. “And yet, until recently you never heard of Charenwell, have you?”

Vernon shook his head. “And how big is this country no one has heard of or can find?”

“Let’s see,” the man said. “Population wise, we are larger than Monaco. In terms of landmass, we are more than three times the size of Luxembourg and the land area currently under development is also larger than that country. We are just under a third the size of Belgium. The climate is comparable to southern Spain, although we do get more rainfall. It has been known to snow there, but that’s a rare event.”

“A country so isolated,” Vernon grumbled, “do you even had electricity?”

“And toilets that flush,” the other man said. “Of course we have electricity. Rather hard to build your plant without it, don’t you think?” the other man asked.

“I can assure you that despite our apparent isolation, we enjoy a standard of living at least as high as what you are accustomed to,” the dark skinned man said. “Although, if you golf, we only have about three courses in the country. We’re building more, but they won’t be ready until next year.”

“Only three?”

“We only have a population of a little over forty-thousand,” the dark skinned man said. “Our population density is lower than Britain. It’s about twelve people per square mile for the country as a whole and three times that in the land that has been developed.”

“Two thirds of your land is undeveloped?” Vernon asked in shock. “Why?”

“No need,” the man shrugged.

“What about private courses? Surely there are clubs?”

“The Queen’s estate has its own course,” the man said. “Playing there is by personal invitation of the Royal Family only. The Duke has

his own course with similar restrictions. So far as I know, the current Duke does not play.”

“Bloody royals,” Vernon grumbled. The two men obviously chose to ignore him.

“So,” Petunia said, “where will we be living?”

“Ultimately in Jamestown,” the man answered. “It’s a new town under construction where the Grunnings plant will be located, among other things. But it will be a few months before anything is available there. For now, you’ll have a flat in Pottersport, our capitol. It’s about twenty or thirty miles from Jamestown.”

“There’s nothing closer?” Vernon grumbled.

“Not unless you would prefer to live in a tent,” the man said.

“A new town?” Vernon then noted. “Under construction you say? Why?”

“It will be where certain manufacturing plants will be located,” the man from the Board of Trade said. “While we have a huge trade surplus, we are a net importer of manufactured goods. That is a discrepancy our Duke wishes to correct. We will have to import raw materials, though.”

“No mines?”

“No. And our laws prohibit mining or any other activities deemed deleterious to the environment.”

“Bloody environmentalists!” Vernon growled. Again the statement was ignored.

“So what’s this Pottersport like?” Petunia asked. While she was probably less thrilled with this adventure, she felt need to diffuse an intensifying situation.

“It’s our oldest city,” the dark skinned man said. “Most of it dates to before the seventeenth century. It’s the home of our fishing fleet and a few of our other industries and has probably the best shopping in the country. Port of Darby has more shopping - that’s our main merchant port, about two hundred miles away by rail or road – but Pottersport has the best. You’ll have a permit to keep your car...”

“I need a permit for the car?” Vernon said.

“As you do in Britain. But Pottersport dates from the tenth century and was never designed for cars.”

“Then why not level it and build it so it can...”

“And destroy our heritage?” the man asked in shock.

“Bloody historic preservation,” Vernon grumbled, “valuable land left useless ‘cause some dead sod who might have met a Royal once lived there...”

The remainder of the two hour drive was similar. It was clear that Vernon Dursley’s ideas would leave the world an industrial waste dump, aside from where he lived of course. They eventually turned into a small airfield that clearly had no passenger facilities.

“What’s this bloody dump,” Vernon grouched.

“The airfield,” the dark skinned man said.

“You expect us to fly out of here?”

“No Dursley,” the man snarked, “we expect you to flap your arms and fly south for the winter! This is a remote and relatively unknown airfield and it is where the plane is waiting. Security is important to us and Heathrow is not considered secure by our standards. Now shut your gob or your Company can expect a report that you are uncooperative and not the best fit for plant manager. I’m sure there

are all sorts of openings for a sacked production manager in this economy.”

Vernon paled. His boss was clear that failure was not an option that would lead to any career opportunities at Grunnings not involving brooms and sweeping.

The car stopped in front of a single story building that looked like it might be an office of some sort. As soon as the car stopped, the boot was open and someone was unloading the luggage, much to Vernon’s delight as he, Petunia and Dudley stepped out of the car. They were led into the building into what looked like a waiting room of some sort. Seated in the room was a man who was probably a few years younger than Vernon and certainly several stone lighter, a woman and three children, two girls and a boy who appeared to range in age from about six to about ten, but one could never tell that from looking with any precision.

“Ah there you are,” the man sitting rose to his feet. “You must be that Dursley chap! Andre Wilson the Third, Gunnings, Armaments Division. So you’re to be the plant manager?”

“Er-yes...” Vernon began.

“You were in drilling equipment, yes? Hardware or industrial?”

“Both,” Vernon said. “I was mostly in wood, metal and stone bits for construction although we also made stuff for British Petroleum.”

“ Yes, well munitions are different, but that’s why you have production managers, eh? Manufacture is manufacture, my boss once said. Been on the munitions side since Cambridge. Fascinating stuff.”

“Munitions?”

“Surely you were told what the new plant will make?”

“Er...”

“With their cheap electrical power, efficient transport and a state of the art plant to reduce manpower needs to a bare minimum, should be able to cut unit cost substantially, eh? True, have to import raw materials, but we do that here anyway.”

“Munitions?”

“You did know Grunnings began in munitions during the First War?”

Vernon shook his head.

“Been our bread and butter. Economy goes up and down, but someone’s always shooting at someone else. That’s what we make. Our plant near Manchester is decades out of date and too bloody expensive to maintain or upgrade and then these chappies come along... Bloody brilliant.”

“Er... what kind of munitions?”

“Army stuff. Navy has its own suppliers. Standard NATO: 9 millimeter pistol, 7.62 and 5.56 millimeter rifle, cartridge linkages, some heavier stuff for tanks and artillery, although it’s just the bursting rounds for the big guns. Someone else does the powder charges. Loads of fun! Then again, blowing things up on purpose is always fun!”

“Er...”

“Not much different that your drills really. Raw materials in. People, process and production. Product out. The details we leave to the engineers, eh?”

“I suppose.”

“The higher ups think if we can realize the production cost savings they think we can, we could really cut into the Krauts’ market share!”

“That is something,” Vernon said. He had to admit, he knew nothing about munitions except they could explode. But the man was right. As plant manager, his job was to keep things coming in one end and out the other as quickly and for the least cost possible. In that regard, it was no different than drills. “What do we know about the plant?”

“Been to the site, I have,” Mr. Wilson said. “It was a couple weeks ago when we were in negotiations. It was just a field then about a mile or so off the existing roads. But I am reliably informed the access road is done and foundation has been poured. They’re laying the rail spur as well. Our plant’s substation’s being erected and they’ve already begun on another power plant for the area. They say we’ll have a chemical plant as a neighbor that’ll supply us with powder and explosives. That’ll cut shipment costs to nothing. Find it hard to believe, but they say we should be able to start production as early as January or February, although where we’ll find labor is another question. It’s not like there’s a bunch of unemployed looking for work.”

“I was told the labor issue’s been sorted,” Vernon began.

“Might well be,” Mr. Wilson said. “These Charenwell types make the Krauts look inefficient and lazy! They said they’ll have a city built by the end of the fall. Not finished, mind you, but housing, shops, schools and everything!”

“You must be kidding?”

“Am I? Bloody Arab emirs seem to build cities in the middle of nowhere overnight. Then again, they’ve got more money than sense. This your family?” Mr. Wilson asked looking at Petunia and Dudley.

Vernon nodded. “My wife Petunia and son Dudley.”

“Pleasure! And this is my wife Renee, daughters Deirdre and Tammy and son Andre the Fourth.”

“Your luggage has been loaded,” the dark skinned man said. “Best if we board. This way.”



He led them out the far side of the building onto the tarmac of the airfield. There was only one plane to be seen. In Vernon's opinion it looked small, uncomfortable and very, very old. He had never seen a real plane that sat on the runway with its tail dragging on a tiny wheel. Painted on the side was a blue and red bullseye and the letters RDCAF was painted on the tail just above a number. Vernon was not about to believe that this relic could fly. A man stood up from under the wing looking like a pilot of some sort.

"My word!" Mr. Wilson exclaimed. "I've only seen one of these in a museum."

"Where it belongs," Vernon grumbled.

The "Pilot" walked towards them.

"Lockheed Hudson?" Mr. Wilson asked.

"Indeed it is," the "Pilot" said. "A Mark VI, transport configured."

"Explains the lack of the ventral turret," Mr. Wilson said.

"You know your aircraft," the "Pilot" replied. He eyed Vernon's wary expression. "This one came off the line in '42 and the RAF got it through lend-lease. I can assure you it's in perfect flying condition and has the latest avionics..."

"What's that?" Vernon asked.

"Communications and navigation equipment. No need for a radio operator/navigator and as we are not about to be bombing anything, no bombardier."

"This is a bomber?"

"Light bomber," the pilot said. "They were also used to hunt U-Boats."

“And you expect us to fly in that?” Vernon protested.

“There were not enough on the manifest to justify sending one of the Dakota’s,” the Pilot said.

“Dakotas?”

“Douglas DC-3,” Mr. Wilson said. “You have those as well?”

The “Pilot” nodded. “Our last Duke was in the R.A.F. during the War. His father allowed them to build a base for training because it was well beyond the range of any mischief the Luftwaffe could drum up, assuming they could even find it. After the War, our last Duke collected examples of every type of aircraft that had called the base a home. There was a squadron of these beauties that searched the sea approaches for U-Boats there, so we have a few.”

“What else?” Mr. Wilson asked.

“It was a training base for Lancasters and American made Douglas Bostons and Dakotas, as well as a basic flight training base so there’s Tiger Moths as well. We have the squadron of Spits that provided (fortunately unnecessary) fighter patrols. They also trained Mosquito and later Typhoon pilots, so we have some of those as well.”

“And they’re in flying condition?” Mr. Wilson asked.

“Unless they’re in for maintenance. Dakotas and Spitfires aside, we have the most of each type flying in the world today.”

“Bloody brilliant!” Mr. Wilson said. “How do you get the parts?”

“If we need a part, we can make it. One of our fab shop blokes says we could probably build these planes, as long as no one needed it within a year or two. Although I don’t think we can forge the engine blocks,” the pilot shrugged.

“Right then,” he continued, “weather’s supposed to be perfect. Flight time is around four and a half hours. There are no frills or beverage service and our loo in the back is as bare bones as you can get. If you need a drink, there’s bottled water and juice in the trunk as you board. The plane is not pressurized so we’ll be flying at about four thousand feet. Any higher and it gets a bit chilly. It should be a smooth ride, but if you lunch decides to take a walk, please use the bags in the pockets in front of your seats. I have never bent and airplane and have no intention of doing so today. In the event that something like that happens over water, that’s probably all she wrote. So let’s board.”

“Can my son and I ride up front?” Mr. Wilson asked.

“Cockpit only has room for one really,” the “Pilot” said.

“No,” Mr. Wilson said pointing at the nose of the plane, “up front!”

“Ah! Well, it’s pretty basic there.”

“That’s okay. Always wanted to ride in the nose of a bomber!”

Vernon knew he would regret this.

Vernon and Dudley found themselves seated as far forward in the plane as possible in seats that were both very narrow (for them) and not particularly comfortable. What was worse, in Vernon’s estimation, is the Pilot told them that they were not to leave their seats until the plane landed. Due to their “size” the weight shift might have “unfortunate” consequences. Vernon thought of saying something to the cheeky bastard, but he had already been assured it was this plane or the dole and he did want to wake up in the morning somewhere on terra firma. To his amazement, this contraptions engines actually worked, the propellers actually spun and when the engines revved up, the plane actually moved. They reached the runway and the plane actually moved quite quickly and was soon actually flying!

It was a smooth flight, and yet the worst flight of his life. Most of it was over water with no land in sight and when they finally crossed over land, clearly descending, there was no sign of “civilization” aside from a flash of road, until seemingly seconds before the wheels touched down.

RAF Pottersport was built before the Second World War when the RAF saw a need to expand to counter the growing German Luftwaffe. Despite its name, and while it abutted the north boundary of West Farm, it was a good twelve miles from Pottersport. The sea coast was four miles to the west, a little over three to the north and just over twenty to the south from the respective boundaries of the base itself. It had three runways. The southernmost one was just a few hundred yards north of the north edge of west farm and ran east to west. The other two were at angles to it, creating a perfect triangle. The hangers, workshops, barracks and other buildings were built along the western leg of the triangle of runways and towards the main highway further to the west.

The nearest town was actually Charlestown just to the south and beyond its western most boundary along the main railroad and highway that linked Pottersport to the Port of Darby about one hundred and twenty miles due east as the bird flew, but over two hundred by road or rail. Then Duke Charlus offered the site to His Majesty’s government “for the duration of the current crisis plus two years” and it became a safe base to train pilots. It was also an ideal location for maritime reconnaissance and, in addition to the Hudsons flying out of the base, flying boats were based both at Pottersport and the Port of Darby. When the base reverted to the Duke, it became his son’s hobby. The former R.A.F. fighter ace collected aircraft and kept them flying, usually with himself at the controls. Since his death, his foundation continued to keep both the base and its planes in good repair.

Vernon knew nothing about that and even if he did, he could probably care less. Vernon finally staggered off the Hudson onto the tarmac. There were far more buildings here than at the field in Britain and more old planes. What he did not see was a proper terminal. There was an office building with a tower and a sign proclaiming “R.A.F. Pottersport – Home of The Royal Duchy of Charenwell Air Force.”

Looking at planes that had been obsolete as warplanes since before Vernon was born, he snorted. Still, there seemed to be people about their business. He followed the others into the building and out the other side where he saw what looked like a brand new bus being loaded with their luggage and probably the Wilson's luggage as well. At least there was something new in this ruddy place, he thought.

He got aboard the bus and took a seat by the window. The others boarded as well but there were no other passengers, which meant the bus was mostly empty as its doors closed and it began to move. As they rode down what had to be the main road of the former airbase, Vernon saw a bright pink sports car speed by in the opposite direction. At least one thing was the same, he thought. There are idiot drivers here as well.

Harry pulled the brand new and very pink sports car to a stop in a space in front of a building that said Flight Operations and had a tall tower. While he had heard about this old base some time ago, this was his first chance to see it given how busy he had been with various projects and with getting used to his rather odd new life. This car fit into the latter category of endeavors. Today was Dora's birthday and he had heard she had been seen in the huge garage at the Manor practically drooling over the sports cars. So he bought her a present. He felt that black, British Racing Green and red were not Dora colors, so he bought one that matched her hair – or at least that matched the hair he remembered from before they bonded. He had picked it up in Pottersport and decided to see more of West Farm and the signs led him up the coast road, past beach houses and ocean vistas and eventually he wound up here. Eager to see more, he got out of "Dora's" pink convertible and entered the building.

"Milord!" a man said. He had been seated behind a counter and jumped up into something like attention when Harry entered. "We – er – weren't expecting..."

"Please, it's just Harry," Harry replied. "Heard about this place and was in the area so I decide to pop buy Mr. – er..."

“Jennings, Sir,” the man replied. “Collin Jennings, Base Commander.”

“Base Commander?”

“Well, I supervise keeping things here up to snuff, so they call me that. Been doing it for close to thirty years.”

“I thought this base was closed.”

“It is, sort of. After the War Duke Charles used it for his collection.”

“Collection?”

“Yes Sir...”

“It’s just Harry. You say Sir and I start looking for a professor intent on putting me in detention.”

“Sorry – er – Harry. The former Duke liked old warplanes, so he collected them. Specifically, he collected planes that had been based here over the War years. He made sure they were in flying condition and saw that each of the old girls got to stretch her wings regular like and were maintained in proper order. He loved the old girls, he did.”

“Girls?”

“Planes.”

“Oh.”

Mr. Jennings then gave Harry a history of the base, including the years following the War to the present. The planes were maintained by elves and volunteers from all over the country who loved to tinker and there was a cadre of pilots to fly them. In some ways, Mr. Jennings thought aloud, they were as much a symbol of the Country as anything and the folks on the ground always got a kick when one

of them flew over even though that was hardly an uncommon occurrence.

“So what do I have?” Harry asked after a while.

“One squadron each – that’s eight planes – of Avro Lancasters, Douglas Bostons and Douglas Dakotas. We can usually put up six. Likewise squadrons of twelve Spitfires, Hawker Typhoons and De Havilland Tiger Moth basic trainers. Ten are operable at any one time. Then there’s three Mosquitoes and three Hudsons - usually two are available.”

“Okay, and what are they?”

“The Lancasters were heavy bombers. They carried the largest bomb load in the European Theater during the War. The Bostons were light bombers we got from the Americans. The Dakotas were transport planes used for just about everything including dropping paratroops. The Spitfires were fighters. Typhoons were fighter-bombers used to bust up tanks, trains and whatever else they could find. The Mosquitoes could do just about everything, although our variants were reconnaissance aircraft. The Hudsons were also bombers, but ours were used to hunt submarines and were designed to convert into transport aircraft. Finally, the Tiger Moths are two seat trainers the R.A.F. used to teach people to fly.”

“Quite an array,” Harry said. “That’s a lot of planes, isn’t it? Sixty-six all told?”

Mr. Jennings nodded. “There are airplane museums with more planes, but we probably have the most of each type anywhere. Certainly the most of any of them that can still take to the sky.”

“Think I could have a look?”

“Why not? They belong to you after all.”

Harry spent the next hour or so checking out his “Air Force.” He looked over one of each of the planes, sat in the cockpits, and

checked out the rest of the interior. He was surprised at how cramped all of them seemed. While this did not surprise him in the smaller planes, he was amazed that the larger ones were so tight. There was an amazing amount of ducking, crawling and crouching, even in the seemingly huge Lancaster bomber. Mr. Jennings remarked that these were not passenger planes built with an eye towards comfort, but planes built with payload and fuel taking priority over creature comforts. Their mission was to carry as much as they could as far as they could to do their mission. Arguably the roomiest aircraft was the tiny Tiger Moth, which was not saying much.

“So, would you like to take one up?” Mr. Jennings asked.

Harry had never been in a plane before so of course he wanted to go for a ride. But he looked at his watch. “I’d love to, but if I’m not back home soon, my girls are going to kill me. One of them is having her birthday today and they’d probably have it in for me if I was late. I was on my way back from picking up her present when I stopped by.”

“What’d you get her?”

“Want to see?” Harry asked.

“Sure.”

He led the man out of the operations building and pointed to the pink car.

The man chuckled. “Nice car.”

“Definitely her color,” Harry added. “It’s a surprise gift. So, if I came round tomorrow maybe?”

“Tomorrow or any day except Sunday is fine, Harry.” It had taken Harry fifteen times to get the man to call him that. Harry, however, refused to call the man anything but Mr. Jennings. It just did not seem right to him for some reason.

“I’ll try for tomorrow then,” he said getting back into the pink car.



The bus drove into Pottersport and Petunia seemed thrilled at the sight. It reminded her of post cards from places on the Continent that had been as they had been for centuries. The main road they were on was wide enough for modern vehicles, but the side streets were narrow. Small cars could drive them, but only one way. The houses on the edge of town looked like back home, with gardens on small lots and two floors, but as they passed by a large park, the buildings on the other side were much older. They were all four stories tall and quite attractive from the outside and they were told most had stood for hundreds of years. Soon, as they neared the center of the town, after passing a large church (which set Vernon off as it was a Catholic church and Vernon could not stand Papists, the fact that the number of people he did not despise could be counted on one hand never having crossed his mind) the ground floors were now shops and restaurants and the sidewalks seemed to have a fair few people going about their shopping. When they crossed High Street, they could see a majestic castle dominating the town along a ridge. High Street itself was lined with shops of all descriptions, but none that Petunia could recognize by name. Dudley was already complaining that his favorite eatery, which was supposedly all over the world, was quite absent.

Two blocks past High Street with theaters lining each side of their road, the bus stopped. They got off and had to load their luggage onto trolleys that somehow appeared. The Wilsons were getting off as well. While Vernon and Dudley grumbled, it was clear the Wilsons seemed to be loving all of this nonsense. The two government blokes then led them up a narrow side street as they pushed their trolleys laden with luggage, never wondering how it was so smooth given the side street had old, brick pavers. Two blocks in, the procession halted and they were told the four story building on their left was their new home for now. There was a large entryway that led into a courtyard which the building surrounded on all sides. They were shown to a door in the courtyard that opened onto a flight of stairs leading up. The Dursleys and Wilsons had flats on the top floor, which were considered the best. Not that it mattered to Vernon as he groused about the lack of any lifts and the fact that he and Dudley would have to haul all the luggage up three flights of stairs.

The flat had a very large main living area with a real fireplace, a nice sized dining room and a kitchen with “normal” and modern appliances. There was a small laundry room and pantry off the kitchen. Then a hall on the courtyard side of the flat led off at a right angle to the living area to the two bedrooms and single bath. Aside from bedrooms, the place was probably larger than what the Dursleys had lived in back in Britain. The bedrooms were no smaller than the two largest in their old home, but Vernon complained about there only being two.

“I’m sorry,” one of the government types said, “we were under the impression that you and your wife shared the same bedroom.”

“We had four!”

“You do understand, lodgings will be available in Jamestown in due course,” the man said. “This flat was available now. It’s not like we have a lot of vacant properties to offer at the current time.”

“Vernon, it’s not that bad,” Petunia said.

“Fine!”

Once the luggage was hauled up to the flat, one of the government men offered to take Petunia to the market to purchase food. She dragged Dudley along as she needed his help carrying the shopping back to their flat. Once they had left, Vernon was alone and collapsed into a chair in the living room near a television that was both newer and larger than the one he had left behind that morning, not that he cared one bit.

Vernon turned on the television and started flipping through the channels. Many of them he recognized; channels that were available on his cable at home including the BBC. There were, however, at least three local channels and he watched Charenwell One Newshour.

If the news was any source, so far as this country was concerned the rest of the world might not exist. The lead story was the construction south of “West Farm” on the coast and the newsies interviewed some workers and what was probably a supervisor with scenes of tall

buildings beginning to rise in the background. One would think construction was a huge, once in a lifetime even. Particularly because there seemed to be a plea for the sightseers to keep the road clear for vehicles and not to venture into the construction zones for their own safety. This was followed by so-and-so's garden party in some such place and a fair bit about farming and some boat returning from three months in the South Atlantic with a record catch of some kind of fish. The weather was just as boring. Sports listed some scores, but none of the football teams Vernon followed. Some team called the Wasps beat another called the Cannons 380 to 10, but Vernon did not catch the sport and figured the piece was included because it was some kind of record thrashing.

Finally, the Royal Family arrived at their estates on South Farm this afternoon for their annual Summer Holiday. There to greet them as per custom was our Lord Mayor Lupin. We are told that Prince Charles was with Her Majesty along with his sons, but that Princess Diana was not. No word has been given for her absence, but given rumors of an impending divorce from abroad, it is not surprising. The young Princes were on hand with his father.

As per custom, the Duke was not in attendance for the Queen's arrival. In fact, it would have been extremely noteworthy had he been there. Accounts are our recently returned sovereign is still settling into his duties both as head of his Estates and as our Head of State, but he apparently found time to shop this morning in Pottersport and apparently picked up a shocking pink sports car for one of his Girl's birthdays. We do not know which of his lovely ladies is celebrating nor when.

The Queen is expected to attend the elevation of Lady Black to her new station as Countess of Darby this Sunday at Government House and to bestow knighthoods upon Lady Black, Lord Longbottom and perhaps one other for services to the Crown last month. Government House has published the official guest list of his Highness our Duke and it would seem he is settling in as there are far more he has invited to this event than for his own coronation. Then again, the Lord Mayor continues to maintain that the coronation was a surprise to our Duke.

“The young man has an aversion to airs and accolades,” a man said whom Vernon assumed was the Lord Mayor. “Had he known in advance, he probably would have scampered off somewhere until we all got tired and went home.”

“Bloody rubbish!” Vernon growled changing channels just as file footage of the Duke from his coronation popped onto the screen. A part of him wondered if the idiot driving that disgusting pink car was the Duke of this bloody place. If it was, then it goes to show why Royals are such a drain. The Queen’s family seemed to make it a point to embarrass her and the Country. She was the only one worth a farthing and even she could be a pain about things. Be better off shot of them all, Vernon thought, except that would make Britain very ordinary, which was unacceptable.

It then dawned on him that he had no idea where he was supposed to work or how to get there. The Wilsons were in a flat on the other side of the landing hand he seemed to know, but there was no way the new plant manager was going to stoop to asking a subordinate for such information.

FRIDAY, JULY 12th 1996 – Number 4 Privet Drive, Little Whinging Surry, U.K. (shortly after nightfall.)

It had taken Albus Dumbledore two whole days following the fiasco at Gringotts just to repair the damage. Well, he thought, “repair” was hardly an appropriate term. The damage remained just as glaring as it had been two days ago. What he had spent the last two days doing was preventing the absolute collapse of the Wizarding World, at least as he saw it. That boy had in less than an hour destroyed what it had taken decades, if not a century to build. It was not irreparably destroyed, but it would take a long time for Dumbledore to return to where he was but a few days ago. The only good news, if there was any, was that Voldemort had taken arguably even a bigger hit and unlike Dumbledore was in no place or condition to even begin to recover.

That being said, Dumbledore needed answers! How could the boy have come into his inheritances? He had never left the Dursleys

according to reports from his people and the devices that monitored the boy had not indicated any change, even when Dumbledore finally returned from Gringotts. He had waited for the boy for over twelve hours and the boy had never emerged. So far as Dumbledore knew, there was no other way in or out of the bank. Finally, knowing he had a lot more to do than stake out a door for a truant, he got hold of Hestia Jones, a reliable Order member, who relieved him so he could get back to Hogwarts to begin to undo some of the damage that the boy had done. The first thing he did was check the monitoring devices. They all seemed to be in working order, all but one. Only the device monitoring the wards on Privet Drive appeared to be indicating that something happened. It was clear from the device the wards were failing, which should not be possible if he was still getting normal readings on the others. Still, the wards were failing. Only one thing could cause that.

The boy, it seemed, was gone.

Still, that had to wait. An attempt to call the Wizengamot into emergency session was in order. The call went out to all members and he needed sixty-five percent of the votes to respond to compel a session. The Will reading had raised questions. But he knew it was much ado about nothing. He had problems with legalities before, such as the incarceration of Sirius Black without trial and the sealing of the Potter Will. Both were patently illegal, as was his taking not only guardianship over Harry Potter, but the proxy to the Potter seat and votes on the Wizengamot. Being Chief Warlock had its advantages. What was illegal when he did it, would be perfectly legal the next day when the Wizengamot either passed a law to such effect at his request or ratified what he had done, where to make it legal for anyone was problematic. If sixty-five percent of the votes were in the country and healthy enough to attend a session, there would be a quorum and the nice thing about the Potter proxy was Dumbledore held proxy over the largest unencumbered and unconditioned number of votes in the legislature.

As had been his practice and certain of success thanks to the Potter Proxy, he made the call. But the vote availability fell far below the required sixty-five percent needed to force an emergency session. His firecall to Wizengamot services shocked him. The Potter votes

were no longer his! The magic recognized Potter as having his full rights and no piece of paper could overrule the magic (for he had not made a law that said otherwise.) Along with the Potter votes, the Bones and Longbottom votes were also held (as in there was a voting member alive to vote them) yet unavailable. That block alone was forty-seven percent of all the votes, meaning their unavailability precluded there ever being a quorum unless one of the houses sent someone to take their seat. Politically, the Wizengamot could not longer legislate!

And that meant he could not make his withdrawals from the Potter vaults legal, which meant the Goblins would break him and by extension the Order unless he came up with nearly two million Galleons very quickly. Any source of funds that did not require him to invade his accounts was needed. There were properties of little value to him or the Order, and he promptly placed them for sale. This included every bondable girl under his magical guardianship. It would not be much. They were not worth much. But every Galleon helped.

Learning that the boy was more than just the heir to the largest fortune in magical Britain, but was in fact the heir to the Dukedom of Charenwell was a shock. It explained why the Potters had been a thorn in his side for close to eighty years. Most witches and wizards in Britain had probably never heard of Charenwell. Dumbledore had. To many, it was a legend used in magical fairy tales. But to Dumbledore, as de facto ruler of Magical Britain, he knew it was real. His attempts to find it (well, to have others find it) had all ended in failure. When he was advised that the last Duke had died, he also learned that the magical children of that realm usually attended school in Britain.

Dumbledore believed that this Charenwell was rightfully part of magical Britain, yet it seemed to have evaded rule from Britain for centuries. He could not allow that to stand lest others get the idea that they could separate. He tried to force them to open at least to him by selling their daughters, not knowing that the acting head of government lacked the authority to respond. Now, his actions had the Ministry breathing down his neck as well as they could find no way not to try to honor the demand for 100,000 Galleons per woman he had sold under highly questionable (in fact quite illegal)

circumstances. The total bill of 4.2 million represented over half of the Ministry's annual revenue.

And with the Wizengamot paralyzed, the Ministry was in no position to legislate its way out of the mess Dumbledore had caused. It could not even raise new taxes. Dumbledore knew the new burden would fall hardest on the Purebloods as all the Ministry had left was the power to enforce laws and impose fines. For ages, many laws had went unenforced and it was mostly the Pureblood elites who lived in violation. They would begin to pay, and they would be as stymied as Dumbledore by the absent votes. That is, unless Dumbledore could find a way to get the votes back, or at least enough of them to undo the real damage that damnable boy had done on one afternoon.

There was one place left for answers: Privet Drive. His monitors suggested the boy was there, but the ward monitor suggested otherwise. Still, Petunia Dursley was there. Her sister was the boy's mother. She might know something. She might know where the boy was, how he got there, how he fooled the Order members who were on guard. And, as the sister to the woman who, had she not died that night almost fifteen years ago was to become a Duchess, perhaps she knew about that as well. Perhaps that was the source of her unjustifiable loathing for her nephew.

He arrived in front of the otherwise non descript two story suburban home well after the sun had set and pulled out what looked like a very elegant cigar lighter. It had been, once. But Dumbledore had made several magical adjustments to the device one of which was particularly useful at the moment. He flicked the lighter and the nearest street lamp when dark. He did this over and over until the street was as dark as it could be, illuminated only by the lights in the windows of the homes. While it was tempting to make a thorough job of it, it was unnecessary as the street was dark enough that no one would notice him and doing so would be noticed by the Muggle residents.

In addition to darkening the street, his little display would also call the guard on duty who was to protect and monitor "The-Boy-Who-Lived." Tonight, that guard was Remus Lupin. He used other Order members, including a Squib named Arabella Figg to monitor the boy during

daylight. He needed trained Aurors to do so at night. Remus had been an Auror, as was his alternate partner Nymphadora Tonks who was currently on "Bereavement Leave" from the Auror Corps, making her the other ideal candidate for this job.

There were other reasons why he selected these two. Last year, he had used a wizard named Mundegus Fletcher for the task. That had proven a mistake. The man was loyal to Dumbledore, but felt no such loyalty to the kid and when the kid seemed safe, was not above abandoning his watch to pursue his less than legal business opportunities. This had almost cost the boy his life. Had Remus not taught him the Patronus Charm during Third Year, the dementors that a rogue Ministry Employee had released against the boy might well have killed him and his Muggle cousin. He needed the guard to be people fiercely protective of the lad.

But he also needed to keep the two he picked in line. Both were the fierce protectors he needed. Remus was because of his relationship with the boy's parents. Why Tonks was was anyone's guess, but she was. It was a perfect assignment for the both of them because it kept them active in the Order but out of any assignments where he was uncertain of their total reliability. Dumbledore was a master at the mind art of legilimancy, which in its passive form could detect "surface" thoughts and emotions or deception. His two chosen guards had a natural defense. Dumbledore could detect practitioners of the art of Occlumency and these two had no such skill. But their minds were a complete blank to him. He knew that in Remus's case, this was due to the man's lycanthropy. He did not know how Tonks had a similar talent, although being born with it was not unheard of. Because he could not sense their thoughts and emotions, he could not truly trust them. But he could trust them to keep Harry safe.

Except Remus did not respond to the subtle summons. A quick, silent spell confirmed that the man was nowhere to be found. This did not bode well, whatever it meant. It could mean the enemy had made a move. The boy was safe behind his wards, for now, but... He approached Number 4 with caution.

There were lights on in the house. The ground floor was lit, although shades were drawn so he could not see inside. He could hear the



Muggle Telly was on and could see a shadow move as if someone was moving about. There was also a light on in an upstairs window, one which he knew was now the bedroom of Harry Potter and a shadow suggested the boy was up as well. This made no sense! The wards, while still up, were failing and that could only be happening if the boy had not been there long enough to recharge them. His presence would have held the wards at full strength. But they were nowhere near that now.

Dumbledore rang the door ... several times. No one answered. The door was locked, but this was no problem for the wizard. With his wand, he unlocked the door, and made sure that if there were any unseen dead bolts on the other side, they were unlocked as well. He cautiously pushed the door open. Instead of lights, the space beyond was dark. He stepped in cautiously and closed the door behind him before turning on a light and raising his wand. But the switch did not seem to work. He cast various charms. There was some kind of different ward based magic at work. It was not his doing. Moreover, no one seemed to be here. His wand lit up and he saw the ground floor was empty. There was no furniture, no carpets. The window shades were magic, not real. The cabinets in the kitchen were open and cupboards bare. Even those Muggle light bulb things were gone. It did not take an extreme intellect to know the boy was gone as well, but he was curious as to how it appeared otherwise from the outside.

In the boy's bedroom (which was also empty) he found the only movable object remaining in the house. There in the center of the floor was a brick. But the brick practically pulsed runic magic. Over the next several minutes, Dumbledore performed a series of complicated detection charms. The brick controlled the illusion he saw from outside. There was also a strong compulsion charm keyed to the former residents that seemed to have made sure the boy's disappearance would never be reported to anyone Muggle or magical. But to Dumbledore's horror, the brick also was mimicking all of the charms he had placed on the boy. No, that was not right. These were the charms and they had been transferred to the brick. The magic in the brick powered the charms and therefore the detection devices in his office.

Only two other people knew about those charms: Severus Snape and Minerva McGonagall. It was obvious which had betrayed him. What stunned him was not so much the betrayal as that was the cost of doing business in this Machiavellian game. No, it was the fact he never saw it coming. She retired right after the Will reading. It had already been approved by the Board of Governors and her pension already paid off in a lump sum. She had said nothing to him about retiring when the term ended and he left for the Continent to conduct research into the man called Voldemort. He returned just in time for the Will reading. It had all happened in the two and a half weeks in between.

Practically her final words to him was that he never stood a chance; the boy was holding all of the cards. In the space of an hour, the boy had rendered the magical government crippled. With the missing votes it now seemed he controlled, they could not pass laws to protect themselves from the second phase of the attack. The government was financially crippled, or would be once the Goblins took action to enforce the reparation payments. At the same time, Voldemort saw over ninety percent of his finances vanish. Dumbledore had suffered a massive blow politically and was being pilloried in the press as the cause of everything. He too, and by extension the Order, was also in comparative financial ruin. This was not the rash act of a vindictive child, but a calculated attack designed to do the most damage with the least amount of risk to the attacker. It was obvious there was a new player in Dumbledore's game. This player played for keeps.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how. Due to some confusion, I'm going to list the Consorts first once their order is established. (Remember, Luna, Alicia and Angelina all bonded after their House already had Concubines.)

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince

Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).

2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).

3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P

5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P

6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

8. Ginevra Molly Weasley, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1 Alicia May Spinnet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

- 1 Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).
- 2 Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR: A NEW LIFE

FRIDAY, JULY 12th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

It had been only about a day, but Stacey's life was very different, she thought as she stood on the balcony of her room. This was not her former life. She had a real room with a large, soft and warm bed, furniture, closets and it was off a living room that was hers as well. The bedroom opened onto a balcony that looked over the gardens that she was told stretched almost as far as the eye could see. As the sun had already set, she could not be sure just how far that was, but the fact she could be outside at all was a change. Her room had windows that would let in the sun, something she had not seen in over a year. Her huge closet was now filled with new clothes that Astoria and Daphne had helped her pick out on their nearly all day shopping expedition in a town called Pottersport. And, she once again had a wand. That vile cretin had taken hers away and said she never deserved it in the first place. Here, she could be a witch.

When Harry had left her not long after her arrival here, she was checked over by three women, all were the young man's Concubines. That's what she was too, although until yesterday all she thought was that she was a kidnap victim without the will to help herself or end her own misery. She knew there was some kind of magic at work. She knew it had to be dark. But it was not dark magic. In her case, it had been perverted and twisted to evil purpose. Here, she was told, that magic was not a burden. It could be a blessing if she really wanted it to be. She heard about how she could choose to alter the bond, which would both bind her closer to her wizard and bind him to her. He would not be hers exclusively. No magic could break the bonds between him and the other six Concubines and two Consorts in his life. But choosing that bond would raise her to the same level. Even if she did not choose it, she would never suffer the life she had known for three years ever again.

She was also asked a lot of questions about her former "Master," as were her friends Mary and Sam. These women were very interested in anything they could learn about "Lucius" and his associates. Stacey had come to believe "Lucius" saw himself as a very dangerous man, one to be feared. The man was nothing compared to

these women and their wizard. There was an aura about them, for lack of a better word. They were good people, but they defended their own and "Lucius" and his associates were not going to be around much longer to do to others what they had done to her and her friends, she thought. For the last three years she had only known evil witches and wizards, the ones who were always villains in her childhood stories and she had wondered if there were any good ones out there. Now she knew there were and boy were they pissed!

Her first few hours here had been information overload. After getting checked over by the three witches, who told her and her friends even more about Concubines and what it could be, and would be for them, they had been led to the "Family Dining Room," which looked more like a banquet hall to her. As soon as she and her friends entered the room, a young, red haired girl was standing before them asking which one was Stacey. Stacey knew she had never met the girl before, but said she was anyway. Ginny was fourteen and had been a Concubine now for just over a day and judging by her attitude, probably thought it was the best thing that could happen to a young woman. She knew how horrible it could be, of course. But that was not here or her Harry. Ginny made the introductions as if playing the role of big sister to the older witch.

Stacey met the girl's three brothers. They all knew their baby sister was a concubine and did not seem to mind. Stacey's friend Mary knew two of the red heads: Fred and George who she said were the most dangerous jokesters known to man. These two boys were just a year older than Stacey was and had already started a thriving business.

"Been mail order," one of them said. "Tried to make a go of it in Diagon Alley but there no shoppers these days, times being dangerous as they are back there."

The two boys each had a Consort their own age. Both girls were Muggle Borns and had somehow avoided being sold, although they now knew that had the Merry Pranksters not bonded to them, they would have been this summer. Each of the twins had two concubines themselves and Stacey knew the ones bound to Fred. Verity and Danielle had been with her in her hell for a time. She was so happy

they were alright and they were overjoyed to see her as well. They had been sold to a shopkeeper in Diagon Alley and their lives had been an improvement of sorts. They worked as shop girls, mostly. But the store owner did use them to derive revenue from a more carnal line of work. It was not nearly as bad as it had been, but it was not pleasant either. While they were free to leave the store and shop the alley on their time off, the “customers” were out there and might want a free sampler. The twins took over the store when it went under and they were part of the deal. That sort of stuff stopped immediately. These boys favorite tactic for discouraging former customers was a hex that changed men into women. They had invented it and, while they were fairly sure it would wear off, they never bothered to find out.

The twins gave their sister a little ribbing about finally being Harry’s Girl. Apparently, she had had a crush on him at one time. It was obvious this Ginny was probably a match for her brothers.

“I’ll have you know,” she said, “I would have applied for the position of Consort. But as there were no openings, I took the next best thing. And I intend to take full advantage of my new position to get shagged senseless three times a day and squeeze out a sprog or two a year beginning before I turn sixteen.”

“You wouldn’t,” one of the boys said.

“Okay, the sprog or two a year probably won’t happen,” she said leading Stacey away.

She met Ginny’s oldest brother Bill again. He was the one who was taking in her friends, although he promised she would still see them quite often. Bill was in his mid-twenties and was a renowned curse-breaker for Gringotts Bank. He too had a Consort whom Stacey remembered from the papers she saw her last year in school before she was locked away all the time. She was none other than Fleur Delecour, the Tri-wizard Champion from Beaubatons Academy in France.

From Ginny, Stacey learned about this new family. The patriarch (if you could call a boy who was not yet sixteen that) was none other

than Harry Potter. Ginny told her, however, that the real Harry was far better than anything she may have read about him anywhere. He was head of two "Ancient and Noble Houses," a Duke and quite well off and would rather not be any of that. Being Harry was more than enough until recently. Now it was being the Girls' Harry. As head of two Houses, he had two Consorts. The one she had seen earlier was Hermione. She was a Muggle Born who was almost seventeen and, as Ginny described her, scary smart. The other one was a fifteen year old Pureblood named Luna, who Ginny said was about the nicest person one could hope to meet, but brutally frank about some things and "don't get her started on magical creatures."

It seemed that Harry had inherited three concubines. Before then, he knew nothing about that sort of thing. McGonagall had in fact been a professor at Hogwarts for decades and Deputy Headmistress for a long time, all the while bound as concubine to the Head of House Potter. The Healer was named Mallory Grant and had been the previous Lord Black's concubine and love of the man's life. Dora, who was a decorated Auror, was the previous Lord Black's other concubine, neither of whom he purchased. They had been gifts. Mallory had been the young Lord Black's thirteenth birthday present when she was barely seventeen herself. Dora had been part of the gift and was not even born yet. Mallory was now thirty-nine and Dora would turn twenty-two the next day. "Although, between you and me, I think Dora's forgotten that tomorrow's her birthday and don't say anything! We want it to be a surprise."

There were two other young Concubines bound to this Harry. They were, like Ginny, Pureblood witches and they were sisters. Daphne was sixteen and Astoria was fourteen. Both seemed happy, even ecstatic with their lot in life. The two girls were thrilled there was another who need a new wardrobe and pestered Dora about getting Stacey a few outfits first thing so they could take her shopping proper in the morning.

"Just make sure you wear comfortable shoes," Ginny said. "Those two took me shopping today and nearly walked my legs off and I need those to wrap around Harry when we do it."



She could not believe how open Ginny was about this. If what Ginny had told her was true, yesterday the girl had been a virgin, and now she was very open about her new sex life. All of the women were. In her past life, sex was one thing neither she and her friends never spoke about, much more looked forward to. These kind of bound women were very different than she had been. She sat between Ginny and Harry's other Consort Luna and they spoke to her as if they had been friends for years. Luna, it seems had not even been Harry's Consort for a week! She too was a virgin when it happened and was even more open about her relationship than Ginny was.

"Do you know what the difference between the Consort and Concubine Bonds is?" Luna asked her as she marveled at all of the food. To her, this dinner was luxurious. Not even the filthy louts who used her for after dinner entertainments ate this well.

"You choose to be a Consort?"

"And basically that's it. They are both sex based Bonds. The same sex acts used to bind you as a Concubine I did to become a Consort, but I chose what to do and who to do it with. It might be that accepting your Bond Mate and the Rite might alter the bond somewhat in your favor, which is why bastards like you knew make it impossible to accept. They won't take Consorts because they lose control to some extent and must accept a witch as equal. That's why they marry. You can ignore a wife and a concubine. You can't ignore a Consort. Yet, Harry cannot ignore his concubines either. You know why?"

Stacey shook her head.

"Each of them accepted this to some extent. They may not have wanted to be bound in the general sense, but accepted that if it must be, than it should be with our Harry. This enabled them to Love Bond with him, which all but destroys the unilateral nature of the Bond. All that remains from before is he can still decide whether you shall be with child or not. Of course, given your age, in this family all you have to do is ask. The only difference between Hermione and I was she is his first love and she is the Duchess. He does love me too, more

perhaps than I could have hoped from any other man and I am merely to be a Countess. As for you and the others, he will love you as much as you will let him. You will never feel unloved if you let him in. Even if you cannot fathom that, take a good look at our Harry. He will be the last man you are ever going to be with and the only one you'll remember."

"How do you know this?"

The young blonde witch cocked her head slightly and said, "We read a lot. Oh I do hope there's pudding!"

Stacey had wondered if she understood both girls. Indirectly, Ginny was saying the same thing Luna had said directly: if you accept this, it will be wonderful.

She would never forget her Bonding with Harry. She had forgotten any details about her first one. It all became a blur in her mind long ago. But she would never forget this time, for to her surprise it was wonderful.

It was right after dinner and part of her was scared and another part worried that maybe she ate too much, a thought she found somewhat amusing in an odd way. Ginny had excused herself early, but Stacey stayed until all had finished, if only because she had no idea where she was or where she could or should go. The guests soon left and she said goodbye to her friends from her past life as they left with their "families." When the guests were gone, the others began leaving the dining room. She wondered what to do, but Ginny had returned. She had shed the nice dress she was wearing and now wore a silk robe with matching slippers. It was shorter than Stacey's bathrobe, ending in a hem just above the girl's knees. Stacey was told this is what all Harry's women chose to wear when the house was theirs alone. Harry never told them to, they just did. Ginny admitted that while she liked the robe, she was so new that she was not part of this fashion custom, but did not mind. She liked the idea that Harry could have her without too much fuss, demonstrating by opening her robe and revealing she wore no undergarments. Nor did any of the others, she said, not even the Consorts.

She led Stacey to the Ground Floor, admitting she was following “directions.” Not orders, she said. She was taking them to the Library and admitted she had never been there before, but she’d only been here a day and spent most of today out shopping in the town several miles away, talking about how she learned this was a magical country, but it was not a part of Britain at all. Despite that most of the people here were magical, they had lots of Muggle things. They drove cars and rode trains and buses – real ones, and had electricity and other things as well. A Muggle could come here and as long as they didn’t look too close, they would never know this was a magical world and it seemed the people here liked it this way. Ginny admitted she liked the lights and the fact she had yet to need her wand. She loved magic, but this way was fun too.

They entered the huge Library and both of them were stunned. Neither of them had seen anything like it.

“Is there a book every written that’s not here?” Stacey asked.

Ginny shrugged. “I can see why Hermione loves this place.” Ginny then went on to explain that Lady Hermione was always studious, hard working and driven to learn and loved books and libraries. And this was an amazing Library. Ginny led Stacey to a long couch which she said was a reading bench. She seemed to be looking for something and when she found it, she sat down and invited Stacey to sit next to her, which Stacey did.

Ginny then explained how she came to be a concubine. What stunned Stacey was not how vile Ginny’s mother appeared to be, but that Harry believed that the woman would use Ginny regardless and in ways that would not be good for Ginny. Not just Harry, but Ginny’s brother Bill believed that would be the case as well. The only way to save her was to bind her to Harry. Even then, they did not know if she had been involved in the plot against Harry, so she needed to be under the bond to come here safely. She was bound as Ginny Black back in London.

“But that will be changed,” Ginny said.

“Why?”

“Can you feel the magic here? Can you feel the magic of where we are sitting?”

Stacey remembered closing her eyes and feeling something magical. That she felt anything at all was such a relief. She feared she had lost her magic over her years in that hell. It was the first proof she had that she was still a witch.

“I don’t know if this spot was magical before,” Ginny said, “but it is now. Shopping today, Story and Daphne told me a lot of things about this place and our new life here. Apparently, some places are very magical and some of those place create powerful bonds between witches and wizards. The Longbottoms had such a place where they bound with their Consorts, and their occasional concubines, for centuries. They have a similar place here. I don’t know if the magic existed before any of that, but it does exist now, perhaps because of the love that was expressed over time. If that’s true, this spot is already very powerful.”

“Why this spot?” Stacey asked.

“Hermione gave herself to Harry right here. For each of them, it was their first time and it was here she became his Consort. It was also here that Luna became his other Consort, again it was her first time. Harry inherited Dora, Mallory and Minerva, and they were bound to him here. Daphne and Astoria as well lost their virginities on this spot and were Love Bound to Harry here on that very afternoon. I will be rebond to Harry here. He made me a Black back in London, but soon I’ll be a Potter and will be for the rest of my life, and that bonding will happen right here. And it is here that you will become a Potter. Daphne says that Harry bonds with love, even if the girl does not feel that for him yet. She thinks it is the reason why all of their bonds have changed and why they are not the pliant, submissive type of concubines who do nothing unless told to do so. They regained their free will, with only their love and loyalty for Harry and his for them being the change from the women they were before.”

“Luna said it helps to accept what will happen. With that, I really can become little different than what she is.”

“I’ve known Luna since we were both little girls. When she says anything that makes sense, you can take it to the bank.”

Soon, others began to arrive. They were all of Harry’s women and they were all dressed in robes very similar to what Ginny was wearing. They sat on large, high backed chairs placed in a semi circle, not unlike seats in a theater with the place where Ginny and Stacey were sitting acting as the stage. Stacey grew nervous and scared about what was to come. It seems Ginny sensed this. She took the older witch’s hand.

“I’ll be here for you, if you wish it,” Ginny said softly.

This was not at all what Stacey expected and she nodded, hoping it would be true. Harry stood before her and stated the oath, although Stacey thought something was off with it. She clearly remembered the last time and that man said something about a sale would break her from his bond. Harry made no such statement. When she was told to disrobe, Ginny helped her and kept a hand on her shoulder as Hermione did something with a wand. She was there when Harry first kissed her, something which had never happened before, nor had she ever had the reaction to Harry with any other man. Stacey remembered every detail of her bonding this time, for they were all wonderful memories from Ginny being there to how wonderful Harry made her feel. She never felt this way before. When it was over, she knew she was Harry’s forever and did not care, because she knew that was what she wanted now.

She sat there and watched as Ginny served as her cross bonder, which she was later told was necessary to bring her into the House Black as her secondary family. After Harry ... made love to Astoria ... there really was no other word for it, he announced he would now rebond Ginny from House Black to Potter. Ginny asked her to hold her hand at least for the beginning. Astoria had been rebonded for some reason and had told Ginny that severing the first bond hurt. It was not physical pain, more like the pain of a broken heart. Stacey

watched as Harry “cast out” Ginny. He was not mean about it and everyone knew it was only for a moment, but when the black collar disappeared, it was clear she was devastated right up until Harry repeated the oath, then a smile spread across the red head’s face. As soon as Ginny’s new collar appeared as she cuddled in Harry’s arms, she asked Daphne to be her cross bonder. Apparently, Daphne’s sister had been Ginny’s first cross bonder and Ginny felt it was only appropriate that Daphne have the honors. The blonde readily agreed and so Stacey watched as Ginny became bound to House Black again.

The bonding complete, the two oldest witches begged “good night.” Harry had apparently seen to their needs earlier. What followed was a lot more sex, as Harry pleased the remaining three witches who remained and Stacey learned about girl sex with the others. Ginny then asked for another turn, and Stacey watched as Ginny Love Bonded with Harry and asked for and received permission to bear his children. Stacey did the same as soon as Harry was ready for her as well. It was a very sated witch, recently rescued from a hell on earth who joined Harry and Ginny in his bed that night, and they had more fun before finally falling asleep in each other arms.

This past day began in Harry’s arms and making love before the three of them enjoyed a comfortable bath together. Stacey had received a silk robe just like the other witches had, but insisted on keeping and wearing her plain, white terry cloth one for now. It was the first clothing she had worn in ages, the first thing anyone had given her since her life changed for the worse and she treasured it as a symbol of what she now saw as her rebirth.

After an amazing breakfast with Harry and the other witches, one which apparently Harry had made himself and without magic, Stacey was shown to her room. Her bedroom, while nowhere near as large as Harry’s, was the largest she ever had and elegantly furnished. While she was told she was free to redecorate, she did not want to change a thing. She shared her Common Room with Ginny, who had her own bedroom opposite. In her bedroom closet, she found three nice dress outfits and a few pairs of shoes and sandals. The dresser had a few changes of underwear. She was told to get dressed, a thrill as these were the first real clothes she had had in a while. Apparently,

Dora had picked them up as soon as the shops opened that morning. Dora had also dropped off clothes for her other friends Mary and Sam where they were staying. How Dora could find such perfect fits baffled the witch, although she was certain magic was involved.

Apparently, Daphne and Astoria had a whole day of shopping planned for Stacey, and they managed to drag Dora along with them over the older witch's protests as she already had been out with them and had a full closet.

Stacey was at least a little taken aback at what the two younger girls considered an adequate wardrobe. They bought everything from under garments up for every conceivable situation from riding horses or brooms, to shopping or casual dining out to all levels of formal occasions (short of a wedding). But the real highlight for Stacey was their first stop. It was a reputable Wandmaker shop on High Street and there she ran into Mary and Sam who were also out shopping with Fleur, apparently almost the clothes hound that the two sisters were. It was here Stacey and her friends became what they were born to be again. With their wands they were once again witches.

Stacey later learned that the reason Dora was out with them today was a conspiracy to get her out of the Manor for a day. The others were preparing a birthday party for the witch. Stacey noted that Dora seemed oblivious to the fact that it was her birthday today, even when Astoria dragged Stacey to a store wholly unrelated to clothes to buy a gift from a list of possibilities one of the other witches prepared. Stacey wondered how she could buy anything. But learned that as she was now one of Harry's Girls, she had access to their charge accounts at several stores in town.

Dora's party began with dinner. The Family Dining Room had been decorated by those who had stayed behind and Dora was very surprised, admitting she had totally forgotten about her day with all that had been going on. The "party" was "just family," meaning Harry and his "wives," were almost the only guests. Dora's parents were there as well. Apparently, they were moving here and were staying at a nice house on a beach for the time being. Dora received gifts from almost everyone. Most were things to help decorate and personalize her room. Her parents gifts included pictures of her and them over the

years and a copy of their album of pictures, which she really appreciated. It was no wonder, Stacey thought, that Astoria suggested a very nice picture frame.

“My turn,” Harry said when all the other gifts were opened. “Okay, first off I have something for all of you girls. I just recently got them even though I asked someone to make them a couple of weeks ago. Dora? Your real gift is later, but as you’re the birthday girl, you get yours first. These gifts are because I am proud of you all, I love all of you and want the rest of the world to know that.”

He handed Dora a ring box. She opened it and gasped. “Harry! It’s ...” Dora could not finish but put a ring on her finger with a large diamond.

“I guess you could call it an Engagement Ring,” Harry said with a chuckle, “not that we really courted. Each one is self sizing and only you can ever take it off. Each one is also unique with their own stone cuts and settings. Dora and all my Concubine’s have a single one and a half carat diamond, with two smaller diamonds. My Consorts’ rings are two carats with four smaller diamonds.” He passed out the other rings from youngest to oldest individual, perhaps because he enjoyed the kiss Dora gave him for hers. To Ginny’s surprise, she was second. She was surprised because he said he ordered these a couple of weeks ago, long before she was bound to him.

“How could you have...” she began.

“The only woman in this room who I did not know would one day be bound to me when I ordered this was Luna,” Harry said. “I have hers as well. It was a rush job for her, but I managed to pick it up today on our one week anniversary.”

Stacey was stunned she got a ring too. She was admiring hers as Harry cleared his throat.

“Of course, assuming I ever was, I am no longer engaged to any of you,” he said handing Dora another ring box. There was another gasp as she opened it. “I guess you can call this your wedding band,



although maybe bonding band is more accurate. It has five stones, 'cause I was told that is a magically powerful number. Two are diamonds and the other three are your birthstones."

"What stones?" Ginny asked.

"Birthstones," Hermione said almost bouncing on her seat. "Each month has a stone and it is said wearing the stone associated with your month has magical protections."

"That's what I was told," Harry said slipping the ring on Dora's finger. As he went around the room, slipping on each of his ladies rings, he told them all what they were. "Dora, as you were born in July, your birthstones are rubies. As a result, we also have Astoria, born in September, sapphires; Ginny, born in August, Peridot; Luna, also born in September with sapphires; Daphne, born in November, Yellow Topaz; Hermione, born in September and sapphires; Stacey, born in May, emeralds; Minerva, born in February, Amethyst; and Mallory, born in January, garnet."

"This is amazing Harry," Dora said expressing what all the others thought.

"Very thoughtful," Hermione agreed.

"He is Harry Potter," Ginny said. "Could we expect anything less?"

"I don't know," Hermione said, "after last year ..."

"You ladies brought me out of my funk in your own ways. Hermione by wanting to love me and letting me love her and all you others...even you Stacey and even though it's only been a day... Perhaps I needed to know that I was not truly alone to be more – er – normal." Harry wiped at his eyes. "But enough of this mushy stuff, there's more!"

"Boys!" Daphne sniggered.

Harry handed Dora another box, this one with her name engraved upon it. She opened it up and looked at him questioningly. "Show the others," Harry said, "as they all are getting one too."

She did. Inside on a velvet base that matched the color of her rubies was a black band with a silver colored "BP" at the center that looked like it might have diamonds in the letters. There were also three pairs of something. One pair was gold, one appeared to be diamond and the third were ruby red.

"It's a collar?" Dora asked with some apprehension.

"Looks almost exactly like the ones magic has bestowed on each of you," Harry said proudly.

Dora looked disappointed as did some of the others.

"It was just an idea," Harry said somewhat hurt.

"What was?" Hermione asked.

"Erm – well only we can see your magical ones. I'm not ashamed of any of you and am thrilled you all are with me, even more so since you have all bonded to me of your own free will. You should not be ashamed, unless you didn't really mean it, I mean. I don't expect you to wear them, but I do want the world to always know you are my girls and I love each of you and am proud that I am allowed to be with each of you..."

Dora still looked unsure, but Astoria opened her box and took out her collar and put it on. "I am proud I am your girl, Harry."

Stacey and Ginny were next, beating Daphne by mere seconds. "Harry rescued me from slavery," Stacey said. "He made me human again, and I will wear this in thanks."

"He rescued Sissy and me too," Daphne said. "We probably would have wound up much, much worse off."

“Me too, it seems,” Ginny said.

Dora nodded and put hers on. “I am proud to be your Dora, Harry.”

Soon all his “girls” were wearing their chokers. Luna and Hermione’s were gold, just like the ones that the rest of the world could not see.

“Th-thanks,” Harry said. “I’m glad you chose to ‘cause it would have ruined the other gifts. Anyway, these necklaces have some charms on them. They are charmed not to interfere with the magic in your magical collars. Like your rings, only you or I can remove them. They also have a rather nasty surprise for anyone who would make an untoward advance on you. Should that happen and the git gets zapped, please thank Fred and George as they came up with it. I won’t have my girls victims of such behavior.”

“What are these other things, Harry?” Dora asked.

“Um ... earrings,” Harry replied. “They go with the chocker and give you a choice.”

“Where’re the clips?” she asked.

“The what?”

“To clip them on your ears,” Dora said.

“Um ... that’s what they had at the store...”

“These are for pierced ears,” Hermione said. “Mine aren’t pierced. Mum said she’d kill me if I came home with pierced ears, although that was about three years ago.”

“It’s not a common practice back in wizarding Britain,” Minerva said.

“But I swear, that’s all they had!” Harry protested. “And this country is even more magical than Britain!”

“Harry,” Andromeda Tonks cut in, “it’s not common practice among British witches, but if the shops here have them, then they are more modern. The older style clips went out of fashion ages ago in Muggle Britain. Unless we’re talking antiques or fake ones for little girls, good luck finding them. There are a few of us witches who favored more modern Muggle fashions and we have pierced ears. Far more choices that way really. Anyway, there is a charm that’ll do the job and I’ve been doing it since before Dora was born. Best part is, it doesn’t hurt a bit. I can fix your ladies up in no time.”

“Thanks Andy,” Harry said.

“You get to explain this to Daddy,” Hermione chided.

“Great!” Harry moaned. “I promised your Dad I wouldn’t marry you tomorrow without telling him and before you finished school. All of which I now have to explain to him and ...”

“I’ll handle the other stuff,” Hermione said. “I’ll even handle the rest of it, don’t worry. Just teasing.”

“Okay,” Dora said, “since we can put these on, are there more pressies?”

Harry nodded handing Dora three more boxes. “These boxes contain a necklace, choice of earrings and a bracelet. The top one is the least fancy and has settings in your birthstones. The middle one is fancier. The bottom one is for State occasions and the like. They have the same charms as your chokers and all the necklaces have your house initials in diamonds, each one larger than the last...”

“Eeep!” Hermione squealed opening the last box. The choker had more diamonds than she had ever seen outside of a jewelry shop. “Harry!” she scolded, “how much did these cost?”

Harry shrugged.

“You don’t know?”

“Actually I do,” Harry smiled. “I just don’t care...”

“Don’t care?”

“Even with all the money I’ve spent on these, your clothes, the new houses and such and other things as well, I’m still going to make money this year, Hermione. My combined estates made millions last year, far more than I can spend. And you girls are worth every knut!”

“Thank you Harry,” Dora said kissing him. “This has been a wonderful birthday!”

“Not done yet,” Harry smiled. “As I said, these are for everyone, but I have another gift just for you. But you have to follow me to see it.”

As Stacey followed the others out, she wondered whether this had anything to do with getting naked and sweaty, not that she wouldn’t mind – not with Harry. She really liked being his lover, even if she was merely one of many and it had only been a day. But she could not believe Harry would be so bold as to get busy with Dora’s parents in tow. Still, given the last day, who knew? She followed the group down the stairs, but they turned towards the main entrance. Harry stopped them.

“Right!” he said. “The elves on staff here have informed me ... when I asked for birthday ideas ... that there was something at the estate Dora took a real interest in. Well, I couldn’t give her that. Besides, the color was all wrong. But I did get her something almost exactly like it.”

“What are you on about Harry?” Dora started.

Harry smiled. “Follow me?” He opened the door and headed out. The others followed. There in the drive under the lights was a small, two-seat convertible sports car – painted shocking pink. Dora squealed and hugged Harry. Then looked up embarrassed.

“I don’t know how to drive,” she said.

“See Tinker at the Garage,” Harry said. “He taught me in no time.”

“Thanks Harry,” Dora said, “it’s perfect!”

“Oooh!” Luna cooed, “do we all get one of those?”

“This is her birthday present, Luna,” Harry said. “You’ll get a car too, on your birthday. You’ll be sixteen then. Although, it does not have to be anything like this one. Anything on the market for under about forty thousand quid is fine. More than that, and you’ll need to talk to me first. Although I do have some in the fleet that are a lot more, these cars are for your everyday use and should be what you want, not what my grandfather thought was needed.”

“Not very practical,” Hermione said. “Can’t see having a kid in it.”

“Not much room for shopping bags either,” Daphne added.

“This is her car,” Harry said. “You can get another type. And, when there are babies, I’ll get People Movers or some such for moving them about safely.”

“If this place is magical, why cars?” Stacey asked.

“Hmm,” Harry pondered, “um, some look nice, the magicals here prefer them to most other forms of magical travel. Unless you enjoy flying a broom, there’s no other way to see the countryside, and the countryside is lovely. Personally, I don’t mind flying, but I can’t take you lot with me on my Firebolt. So I drive. And before you say it, I hate using the Floo!

“This country embraced technology some time ago. We use magic, but if there is technology that is better or easier, we use that instead. Electric lights are brighter and safer than gas lamps or candles. The homes here have central air which means they are warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer than magical homes in Britain. We have our own telly. Our fishing fleet is magically assisted Muggle ships, which is why we are the largest supplier of seafood products for most of magical Europe. The list goes on. Magic is but a tool, not an answer.”

“So you’re going to buy us all cars?” Hermione asked.

“For your birthdays,” Harry nodded, “if you are at least sixteen.”

“You’re not and you drive,” Hermione pointed out.

“I told you, as Duke I have a dispensation,” Harry said. “Look, it’s not like you’ll need it all that often. But it will be there when you do. Do you honestly think your parents will floo over when they come here?”

“I guess I see a point to it. Still, all of us? What about parking?”

“Most cars will be garaged in the garage thing – for lack of a better word. It’s more a warehouse with cars than what I’d call a garage, but still. You need your car, your elf will contact the garage and it will be brought up for you.”

“Elf?” Dora asked. “We don’t have elves!”

“Er ... well ...oops.”

“Ooops?” Hermione asked.

“Well, you will,” Harry said. “I’ve been told I have scores of young elves and elf maidens in need of employment. The new houses will require a fair few of them, but there’s still a surplus. I was thinking of assigning elf maidens to all of you to handle, well chores and schedules and whatever it is you need to free you up for school and training or work and stuff. That won’t happen until a bit later, but that’s what I was thinking.”

“I see,” Hermione said. “They will be paid...”

“Hermione, these elves are not slaves. They are paid you remember. That won’t change. All I’m doing is finding them useful employment. When they are not needed to tend to you and your affairs, there will

still be work they can help with around the estate. Let's face it. We can probably use the help."

"Fine," Hermione said. "I can see your point. This place is a bit large for us to maintain ourselves, even with magic."

"Well, it's settled then," Harry said. "Let's say we pop back to the Dining Room for Dora's cake, shall we?"

As Stacey stood on her balcony looking into her second night here at the Manor, she realized that there was now hope. She stood in her bathrobe, which she considered a symbol of her freedom. Yes, she was bound to a wizard, but this was so different. Next week she would sit down with Minerva to discuss in detail continuing her education. She was thinking of doing her O.W.L.s all over again. She did not know how she had done, but given her life at the time, she doubted she had done well.

Just two days ago, she lived in a windowless room she thought of as a cell. She literally had nothing, not even clothes to wear. Now she was living in what could be called a Palace, she had a wand again, a closet full of clothes, and a handsome Prince (well Duke, really) in her life. True, it was not ideal in the fairytale sort of way. She was but one of her handsome Prince's "wives." Then again, there was nothing in those fairytales to suggest the heroine was not part of a harem in the end, only that she lived happily ever after. Perhaps, now, she could have a life. This was certainly a start.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St.



David's.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
8. Lady Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); Bound to House of Black 7/10/96; CONCUBINE HOUSE OF POTTER 7/11/96.
9. Lady Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (5/26/79) (SA-5). Sold to Lucius Malfoy 7/17/93; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF POTTER 7/11/96.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (5/5/78) (Ra-5). Sold to Lucius Malfoy 7/16/94; CONCUBINE OF WILLIAM WEASLEY 7/11/96.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (12/14/78) (SG-5). Sold to Lucius Malfoy 7/18/95; CONCUBINE OF WILLIAM WEASLEY 7/11/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE: FLYBOY

SATURDAY, JULY 13th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, West Farm, Charenwell.

A different sports car pulled up to the Flight Operations building at around ten in the morning. The driver had toured the rest of the “base” on the way in, unlike the day before. It was as if the base was all out on a pass for the day, not like it had ceased to be an airbase almost fifty years earlier. There were barracks, housing units, a base hospital, warehouses and facilities too numerous to count all looking like it could start up again once the word was given. He did not go in any of the buildings, but they looked well maintained. The man had said this was granddad’s hobby. Some hobby, he thought.

He entered the Flight Operations building and there was Mr. Jennings and another man waiting. The other man was named Owens and was part of “this cobbled together” operation. Harry learned there were about a hundred or so who came here to fly the planes or held the elves maintain them. The grounds and other buildings were all maintained by the elves. Harry was led into what looked not unlike a locker room and an elf assisted him in getting “kitted out.” He was soon in a set of coveralls, with a leather jacket and boots. There was a leather cap with goggles and earmuffs that he was told allowed him to hear radio communications in flight. Finally, a large backpack was placed over the whole thing. It had more straps than Harry knew what to do with and the elf made sure they were all where secured the way they were supposed to be – including two between his legs that were cinched so tight he was almost hoping his girls were too tired to play later.

“What’s this?” he asked the Elf.

“Parachute, just in case,” the Elf replied. “You don’t know how to apparate, do you?”

Harry shook his head.

“Good! Worst thing you can do if something goes really wrong. Most likely you’d wind up splinching and still falling to your death. Parachutes are safer in a catastrophic emergency. But no need to worry. Our pilots have been wearing them for going on fifty years now and never had a need to use one for real.”

“For real?”

“Well, there are those who jump out of airplanes for fun,” the Elf said. “Not my idea of fun, but it does mean I get to repack the chute. I’m Eddy. I handle survival gear.”

“Survival gear?”

“Parachutes, oxygen supplies, life rafts for ditching over the sea, flares, that sort of thing. Aside from the oxygen, my job is best if it’s never needed and so far so good, although it means no case of beer.”

“Beer?”

“Custom is if you bail out and walk away, the parachute rigger gets a case of beer for his efforts. Never got one in thirty years and neither did my Dad. The maintenance section’s never had a problem so the only thing dangerous about our planes would be the pilots and we haven’t lost a bird yet.”

“Good to know.”

“Right then,” Eddy said, “they’re waiting for you on the flight line, Sir.” The Elf then proceeded to give Harry directions.

Harry soon was out the far side of Flight Operations from his car and Mr. Jennings, Mr. Owens and another Elf was waiting. He noticed he was the only one dressed as he was and walked up to them with a very confused look on his face.

“Er...is there some reason why I’m the only one dressed?” Harry asked.

“You look smashing,” Mr. Jennings said. “Harry, this is Darpa our Line Chief,” he said indicating to the Elf. “Bow to him, please?”

Harry wondered if this was a prank, but complied and the Elf placed his hands on either side of Harry’s head for a moment without saying a word. Once the hands were gone, Harry stood up and looked at Mr. Jennings with a confused expression.

“Now,” Mr. Jennings said, “do you really need one of us to come along and hold your hand?”

Harry thought for a moment. He then smiled. He did not! It was just like when Tinker “taught” him how to drive! He looked at the bi-wing Tiger Moth and knew he could fly it! He smiled at Mr. Jennings then trotted over to the plane beginning his preflight checks to make sure everything was buttoned up and in proper order. He checked the fuel levels and opened a section of the cowling that allowed him to check the oil level. Satisfied that all was in order, he stepped on a foot strut and climbed into the front cockpit.

There was a preflight checklist there and he read it. He worked the controls of the plane and looked at the wings and tail to make sure the right bits moved when they were supposed to. He made sure everything was set up properly in the cockpit and adjusted his engine fuel mixture for start up. He plugged his radio cord into the right receptacle and looked to see if the ground crew was ready. Standing by the right side of the nose of the plane was an elf with a hand crank already in place. Another Elf stood at a safe distance with a fire extinguisher, again just in case. He was ready!

“Contact!” Harry called. The Elf began turning the handle and the propeller began to rotate in a somewhat jerky manner until Harry heard the engine caught a couple of times and then catch and begin to hum, the propeller now spinning too fast to see. He had a face mask that had his microphone and put it on. “Pottersport Tower, this is Potter One, request instructions for taxi to active.”

“Potter One, Runway two-seven is the active. Winds 110 at five knots. Altimeter is fifty-eight feet.”

Harry made an adjustment to one of his gauges. “Runway two-seven, Roger,” he said. He made a hand single to indicate the ground crew could pull the chocks. When he was signaled that it was done, he pushed the throttle forward, the engine pitch increased and his plane began to move.

SATURDAY, JULY 13th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell.

Dudley had woken early his first morning in this new place. True, he thought as he changed out of his pajamas, this might be a new place in another country, but he was not about to let that interfere with his routine. Ever since he returned to his school, he was intent on changing things, and the first thing he could change was his appearance. He had taken up running along with other forms of exercise and he had not missed a morning run in months and would not let something like being in a strange new place change that. He wouldn't even let his own mother change that. She had insisted he eat breakfast when he returned over the Christmas Holidays, but that interfered with his runs so he refused.

“You're going out for a walk today?” Petunia asked in shock as he passed the kitchen in his running kit.

“Yes,” Dudley said.

“Surely you can miss one day,” she huffed. “We don't even know our way around. We don't even know if this place is safe!”

“I'm not missing a run,” Dudley said. He found it mildly amusing that his mother thought he went for walks. She didn't seem to get the need for exercise, then again the woman could pack the food in and never gain weight. From his own recent experience, Dudley knew he did not enjoy that luxury. Two years ago, his waistline was almost equal to his height and walking of a flight of stairs left him winded and in need of a sugary soda. He had thought that was normal. His father

was just as corpulent. His school had not thought so and forced him onto a strict diet and exercise program that he had to adhere to or be dropped. At the time, the only good thing he could say about it was that his size got him into boxing. But he soon learned that boxers had to be really fit to throw punches for even one round and keep their guard up. Since he did not like getting knocked down all the time after a few seconds, he had taken to getting fit. The results showed. None of his clothes from before fit. True, he had grown a few inches in height and was now the tallest in the family, but he had lost feet in all probability around the middle. His mother fretted that he was too thin, but he refused to allow her any chance to fatten him up.

Dudley stretched in the courtyard before running out the gate and turning left up a slight hill towards the bluff. He counted the blocks as they past so he could find his way back. The sixth cross street was as far as he could go as the houses across the way were right against the bluff. It did not matter, but he chose to turn left. After two more blocks he came to the main street with all the shops. He could turn left and run past the shops, but there were a lot of shoppers about. He could go straight and continue to run along the street at the base of the bluff, or right and follow a road that looked like it would take him to the top of the bluff. He chose to run up the hill. The road up the hill began pretty much in the same direction he had been running. It was not an easy run, but Dudley took it as a challenge and was determined to make it to the top without stopping. About half way up as near as he could judge the road switched back and climbed in the other direction. In front of him now as he climbed was a huge and impressive castle.

Dudley was pleased when he crested the ridge without stopping, but having achieved his goal and being quite winded with lungs burning, decided it was prudent to stop. Across the road to his right, facing away from the town, towered the castle, even though it was at least a couple of football pitches to the outer fortification. To his left, a paved, tree lined walk with a railing hugged the edge of the bluff and overlooked the town below. He walked along the path catching his breath and looking down on the town below, the harbor filled with fishing craft and the bay and sea beyond. As hard as the run up had been, Dudley thought it was worth it. He leaned over against the rail and looked out at the view.

“Nice day isn’t it?” a feminine voice asked after several minutes.

Dudley turned and saw a girl standing near him, just a few feet away actually. She was not looking at him but out at the view. The breeze had seemed to pull her long, light brown hair away from her face. Dudley thought she was very pretty.

“Yeah,” he said nervously. Back home, no girl had ever said a word to him before; at least not nice ones.

“It’s so peaceful up here, don’t you think?” the girl continued.

Dudley nodded. She had a nice voice too.

“I like to come up here on days like today,” she said. “It’s a good place to read.”

“I suppose,” Dudley said.

“You don’t seem to like it,” she said.

“No,” he said quickly, “I do. It’s just...”

“Yes?”

“Never been before.”

“Oh. Why not?”

“My family moved here just yesterday.”

“Oh. Sorry, I just assumed you were from around here. Odd that, though.”

“It is,” Dudley asked.



“Well, people here don’t really move much. So you’re from Port of Darby originally?”

“Where?”

“Oh my! You’re not from here at all, are you? Not until yesterday, I mean.”

“Little Whinging,” he said.

“What? What’s that?”

“It’s where I lived. It’s in Surry.”

“That’s in England, isn’t it?” the girl gasped. “Near London, right?”

Dudley nodded.

“Oh my! Don’t meet many folks from there and most of them are old. Well, since you are new here, I’m Clara.”

“Dudley,” he replied.

“That’s your name? Dudley?”

Dudley nodded hoping the girl would not laugh, or worse make some comment about Mounties or Dudley Dooright or Nell. When he was little the older boys at school loved doing that to him ... and then he took out his frustrations on Harry. It was no longer a memory he was proud of.

“It’s a family name,” Dudley said. “Don’t know which side, though.”

“Oh. Well, we don’t get to pick our names, do we?”

“You don’t like yours?”

“Not really.”

“I do,” Dudley said. “It’s not common and not silly either.”

“Th-thanks,” she said and smiled at him. “Why’d your family move here?”

“Dad’s job,” Dudley said. “His company’s doing something here and he was sent.”

“Oh. We don’t get many people from England here. Mostly someone from here meets someone over there and they get married. That’s kind of what happened in my family. My Granddad was from ... can’t remember if it was England or Wales ... anyway, he joined the Royal Air Force during World War II as an aircraft mechanic. The RAF had a base here and that’s where he was sent to work on planes. He met my grandmother, whose family’s been here for ages, at a dance here in Pottersport. They got married and when the War ended he stayed. I don’t think I’ve ever met someone from Britain who was here who was not somehow connected or married into a family from here.”

“We’re not all that bad,” Dudley said. He didn’t think he was anymore, but that change was recent. A year ago, she would not have said a word to him.

“Oh, I do know people from Britain,” she said. “I do go to school there. A place called St. George’s near London. Ever heard of it?”

“Don’t think so,” Dudley said. “There’re a lot of schools in London. I went to Smeltings myself.”

He thought she looked at him a little funny, but she didn’t seem to act like anything was off. “I suppose there are,” she said. “I liked my school mostly, but Mum and Dad are thinking of not sending me back.”

“Oh?”

“What with the troubles and all.”

Dudley wondered what that was about. The only troubles he heard about were in Northern Ireland and he thought they were mostly over.

“Not going back to Smeltings either,” Dudley said. “Something ‘bout travel restrictions or some such.”

“So what are you going to do with your year off?” Clara asked.

“Year off?”

“Certainly,” she said. “The Duke’s building schools for us, but they won’t be open ‘til next year, or so they say.”

“I was told there were schools.”

“Primary schools,” she said then paused for a moment. “Why do you think I was in school in England? If it were up to me, I’d never want to go there at all. It’s much nicer here. Course, it means my O.W.L.s will be delayed, but I could use the time to revise so they won’t be the nightmare they seem to be.”

Did she just say something about owls? Dudley thought. He was certain he heard wrong.

“Oh MY!” she gasped. Clara was not looking at Dudley, but he could tell something upset her. She looked either scared, disgusted or both and he was about to ask when she did something that rendered him incapable of speech. She pulled out a wooden stick. He did not want to believe it, but he knew what it was. She then said something like “Depulso” and shuddered for a moment. “I hate spiders,” she said to no one in particular. Dudley felt the blood draining from his body.

“You’re a...” he began, but could not say it.

She looked at him and he saw concern on her face.

“Dudley, are you okay?”

“You’re a...”

“You should sit. You don’t look too good.”

“You’re a...”

“I’m a what? What’s wrong? I’m breaking out, aren’t I?”

Dudley shook his head. “...a ...a...a...”

“Try and breathe, Dudley. I really don’t know any spells for chocking. What are you on about?”

“...a witch! You’re a witch!”

“Don’t be silly, Dudley. Of course I’m a witch! What’s so surprising about... Oh my! You’re not magical, are you?”

Dudley was calming down a little. He shook his head.

“But you do know magic is real, right?”

Dudley nodded.

“Come,” she said, “let’s have a seat. I meant it when I said I don’t know many good Healing spells. I think it would be best if we sat down.” She took his hand gently in hers and led him to a tree, bidding him so sit. For some reason, Dudley sat. Sometime later he wondered why he did not run off, but decided is that he really kind of liked the girl even if she was one of those people. “Are you okay, Dudley?” she asked after he and she were seated on the grass. There was genuine concern on his voice.

Dudley nodded. “I just didn’t expect...”

“Oh,” she said seeming to understand. “I’m sorry. I thought you knew.”

“How would I have known?” Dudley asked, hoping he did not seem annoyed.

“This is Charenwell, after all,” she said as if this was somehow obvious. She quickly realized it was not. “You’ve known someone who was magical back in England, right?”

“My cousin,” Dudley said starting to relax. “He was...is...well...”

“Was? Is?” Clara asked confused.

“My Mum’s sister was a ... a witch apparently. She died when I was a baby, so I never met her as far as I know,” Dudley said.

“I’m sorry,” Clara said softly.

Dudley shrugged. “Anyway, my Aunt married a wizard, I guess. Never met him either ‘cause he died back then as well. Dad always said they were no account, lay about drunks and died in a car crash. I believed him too, just not anymore. That was before I knew they were like you, or that my cousin Harry was like you too. He came to live with us. He went to a magical school called Hog – something.”

“Hogwarts?”

“That’s it. Anyway, he didn’t like living with us. Don’t blame him. Mum never liked him and Dad hates magic. Got me to hate it too for a time. Harry didn’t ... he didn’t deserve the way my Dad saw him treated. No one does. Anyway, when he got back at the end of last term, he scampered. I would too if I were him; assuming I had somewhere else to go. I hope he’s with friends. He deserves that.”

“Were you mean to him too?”

Dudley hesitated. “Yes,” he said in a small voice. “I – I don’t know if I wanted to be when I was real little. But my parents expected me to be and ... I’m not proud of it. I don’t know if I ever was, but not anymore.”

“Something happened?” Clara asked.

“Dementors,” Dudley said and Clara gasped. “You ever meet those.”

“No,” she said horrified. “I’ve heard of them. We don’t have them here. That’s a British magical thing.”

“Nasty things,” Dudley said. “It was last summer. I was out with my gang doing what we usually did, which was not very nice. It was night. I was heading home and we ran into my cousin Harry who was sitting in a play park for some reason. Anyway, it had been really hot outside and suddenly it was really cold. The others ran for it and Harry says to me something about Dementors and we needed to run for it too. I usually wouldn’t have listened to him, but something was off around us and there was this tone in his voice and...we ran for it. But they caught us.”

“Oh my!”

“I never saw the things...”

“There was more than one?”

Dudley nodded. “Two, I was told later. Anyway I never saw them. Not being magical is what I was told. But I sure knew they were there! I felt ... horrible. They made me see horrible things. What’s worse, they made me see what I really was like somehow and it was not pleasant. I didn’t want to be that boy, and yet I was and they made me think it was all I ever could be and I’d never be happy or have real friends or anything and all I wanted to do right then was die.

“Then there was this bright light. Really bright! And the darkness faded and I felt ... I don’t know how I felt. Better? I saw Harry with his wand out and at first thought he had done that to me.”

“I don’t think there’s a spell that can do that,” Clara said.

“But how would I know?” Dudley replied. “Besides, deep down I thought if it was him what done it, I deserved it. I was really out of it when we got home. My parents actually took me to a magic hospital. When I got back, Harry was gone. He was off to friends or something for the rest of the summer. I never got to say thanks and now he’s gone all over again.” Dudley was trying not to cry.

“Spent the last year trying to become worthy of what he did for me that night,” Dudley said. “I tried hard at school and did better. I dumped all my so called friends, ‘cause they were really the wrong sort. I stopped picking on people or worse. Got in shape. I don’t want to be like I was before. I don’t want those Dementors to be right about me. My Dad doesn’t know this. Mum doesn’t really know either. Dad wants me to be a no good lout who hates everything and everyone just like him. Mum just wants to pamper me to death. I want to be someone I can be proud of, which is someone my Dad would probably hate, but...,” he shrugged.

“So in a way, a magical like me made you a better person?”

“Made me want to be, yeah. Magic still freaks me out a bit,” Dudley said.

“Then I’ll not do it with you around,” Clara said.

“Wait a sec,” Dudley exclaimed. “You’re not ‘of age’ or whatever it’s called, are you?”

“Fifteen,” Clara said. “I’ll be sixteen in November.”

“Sixteen myself little less than a month ago,” Dudley nodded. “But why didn’t you get in trouble for that magic thing? Once Harry started school, anytime he did it he got in loads of trouble from the wizards. Doing magic under age. Doing it in front of ... people like me.”

“That’s Britain for you,” Clara said. “People here say nothing good ever came from living there.”

“Hey!”

“They meant the British magicals are a backward lot. They are. We were originally part of England a long time ago, but then we became independent and they went their way and we went ours. We think our way is much better. You know why your Cousin got in trouble for doing magic?”

Dudley shook his head.

“We have this thing called the Statute of Secrecy. It’s very old. Most magical governments signed it. The purpose of the Statute was to hide magic from the rest of the world. Britain hides it by punishing people for doing it and by making non-magicals forget they saw it. Their way, however, makes them live apart from the others. Did you know they don’t even have electricity? It’s like they stopped in the sixteen hundreds or earlier and stayed there while the rest of us moved ahead. But if you speak to them, they think they’re all high and mighty. Superior to everyone else. They forgot why the Statute was signed in the first place.”

“Why was it signed?”

“Well, if you learned history from the Brits, you’d think it was because we were doing everything for the non-magicals and got tired of it. They think they are all powerful compared to people like you. Not all of them, mind you. Some do know better and the ones who were raised outside of magical society – like your cousin I suppose – know that’s not true. But ask yourself this: if you were more powerful than someone, so powerful they could never match you, would you hide from them?”

“No,” Dudley said. “That’s just silly.”

Clara nodded. “The reason for that Statute and the laws magical countries have passed to enforce it is because when it was signed, we were no longer so much more powerful than you that we had nothing to fear. One on one, I guess we still might be. But in Britain and in most of the world, for every one of us, there’s a thousand of



you. And now you have technologies that are far more dangerous than magic.”

“Okay, so why is it different here?” Dudley asked.

“Because most of us are magical,” Clara said. “Here, for every one like you, there’s eight or nine of us. Almost every child born here is magical. The rest know all about magic. There’s nothing to hide from each other here. We choose to enforce the Statute not by hiding from our neighbors, but by hiding all of us from the rest of the world. We’ve been safe for ages. While we supported Britain in World War II, war has never touched us. Not a non-magical one, nor a magical one. Not even the magicals in Britain know where we are, assuming they even know we exist.”

“You hid a whole country?” Dudley asked. “How?”

“Magic,” Clara said. “And please don’t ask what kind. I really don’t know. It’s not that big a secret, but it’s awfully complex and I haven’t got anywhere close to learning about it in school.”

“So where is this place really? I mean, well, I know it’s not on any maps.”

“Port of Darby is on our eastern sea shore,” Clara said. “It’s about a hundred and twenty miles east of us. It’s the closest point to England. It’s about three hundred miles southwest of Land’s End. Maybe a bit more.”

“You hid a huge bloody island? You can do that?”

Clara shrugged. “I don’t know if we could if we had a neighboring country like in Europe. But being an island, yes I suppose.”

“That’s really kind of cool,” Dudley began. A noise up in the sky caught his attention. He looked up and saw a small bi-plane passing overhead. “What’s that?”

“You have seen an airplane before,” Clara chided.

“Oh yeah,” Dudley shrugged. “I guess ... well, I didn’t think...”

“Didn’t think we’d have any?”

Dudley nodded.

“Our British ‘cousins’ probably don’t. They fear technology. We don’t. We have cars and computers and everything.”

“Really? Cool.”

“So,” Clara said with a smile. “You’re not still scared of me?”

“No,” Dudley said. “You’ve been very nice.”

“Well then,” Clara said, “since you’re not scared and since you’re new here, why don’t we go back to town. We can stop by where you’re living and you can get showered and changed and I could show you around your new home.”

“I’d like that,” Dudley said standing up and helping Clara to her feet.

“And can you promise me you won’t get all freaked out if you see a wand?” Clara asked.

“I promise to try not to,” Dudley said.

“That’ll work,” Clara smiled as the two began the walk back to town.

SATURDAY, JULY 13th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, West Farm, Charenwell

He had been up almost three hours. Harry had begun by shooting four “touch and goes” to practice landing the plane with the knowledge the Line Chief had passed. He knew that like the cars, he still had to fine tune his coordination. Once he was satisfied, he flew off to the Exercise Area just off the coast to practice spin and stall

recovery, as if that went really wrong, he would be in his parachute and the plane would crash into the water and not on someone's head. But nothing had gone wrong. A loop and a couple of rolls later and he decided it was time to head back. As he still had more than enough fuel, he decided to fly over Pottersport and then his Manor on the way back to the base for his final landing. This was almost as much fun as flying his broom! But the best bit, he thought, this was flying Hermione might not object to – well, he probably could leave out the spins, stalls, loops and rolls.

He “greased” his landing and began the taxi back to Flight Operations. In his mind, he began thinking that this might be something useful. He was not sure how, yet. But he wondered if others could learn like he had and if they did, if they could also learn to fly the other planes here. That would be something, he thought as he noticed that one of the big Lancasters was moving, all four of its propellers spinning. A moment's confusion, then he remembered that Mr. Jennings said the people here tried to fly all these planes somewhat regularly. And if they had a few more pilots...

He soon had his plane parked in front of the Flight Operations building, its engine shut down and the wheel chocks in place. As he climbed out of the cockpit, he stopped as he watched the large bomber take off. Man that's so cool, he thought. He jumped to the ground and saw Mr. Owens snap a picture of him before he could even think to react. He did not like “surprise” photographs.

“What was that for?” he asked.

“Tradition, Milord,” Mr. Owens said. “We always snap a photo of a new pilot right after their first solo flight. One copy will be yours to keep and another will hang in the Officer's Club here on base. Every pilot who ever learned to fly here has their solo picture there, including your Grandfather.”

“Oh,” Harry replied. Despite the special pensieve, he actually felt more connected to his grandfather now. Mr. Jennings walked up and pinned something on the flight jacket. “What's this?”

“You’re wings, Milord,” Mr. Owens said. “Once you solo, you are a pilot. Now, it doesn’t mean you’re fully qualified. We’re not about to let you take off in any of our other birds and certainly not at night or in bad weather. You still need several more hours and you need to learn instrument flying, navigation and a lot of other stuff. But we offer a “Ground School” for that.”

“Ground school?”

“There’s a lot more to flying than just being able to take off and land safely,” Mr. Jennings said. “Your Grandfather’s regulations are clear. You can fly Tiger Moths under VFR conditions, but you need to complete ground school and have at least fifty flight hours logged before moving on to the bigger birds. The school takes four weeks, three hours a day four days a week if you do it all at once.”

“Oh.”

“But no worries. Welcome to the Royal Duchy of Charenwell Air Force, Flying Officer Potter!”

“Wow! Um...”

“Yes Harry?”

“I mean, could others learn with me?” Harry was not about to not let his girls know about this. He didn’t think all of them would want to, but he knew some would.”

“How many?” Mr. Jennings nodded.

“Not sure right now,” Harry said. “Could be only twenty or so. Could be a lot more than that.”

“Ideally, if it’s more than that, we’d need a few more trainers,” Mr. Jennings said in an odd tone. It did not seem to Harry that the man was saying it could not be done. “You got some time, Harry? There’s something I think you should see.”

Harry looked at his watch. "I've got time," he said.

They took Harry's car. Harry had not even bothered to change out of his kit, save for taking off the unused parachute. Mr. Jennings directed him on a drive along a road that had been built around the perimeter of the airfield, and then on what looked like a dirt road leading to a very large, rocky hill about a half mile to the east (and, Harry noted, also out of any of the flight patterns). The road looked like a dirt track, but drove like a regular road. He headed straight at the hill and was told not to slow down, even though Harry thought he was going to crash.

Except he didn't crash. Just when the car should have smashed into the side of the hill, it passed through a barrier and he was on a huge tarmac. The side of the hill was now a good hundred yards from the barrier and looked like it had been carved away into a vertical space. Spaced several hundred yards from each other, or so it seemed, and where the manmade cliff met the tarmac were four sets of huge hanger doors. Harry was directed to park in front of the nearest one. He followed Mr. Jennings to a small, normal sized door that was within one of the center panels. Mr. Jennings unlocked the smaller door, opened it and stepped inside with Harry following. Lights came on and Harry saw he was in a huge cave carved into the hill.

"What we passed through was a ward," Mr. Jennings said. "It's a form of magical camouflage. Unnecessary, really. But back early in World War Two, the Muggle RAF was concerned the Germans might actually find this place and try and do something about it. We're out of range of the bombers they sent against Britain, but their Condors could make it this far. And, at the time this was built, the Royal Navy had not yet contained the German Surface Fleet. The RAF wanted someplace safe from bombs and shells for hangers and for munitions stores. Your Great-grandfather proposed this, an underground complex. Needless to say, while the Muggles were impressed with the idea, they felt it might take years to build. Wonderful thing, magic. It took two weeks."

“So? I mean the camouflage is amazing and this is too, but so? What does this have to do with training pilots?” Harry asked.

“Off to the sides of this hanger – and all the others – and in back are smaller tunnels that were to house workshops, even barracks and the like. After the War, when your Grandfather began his collection, he knew that getting all the parts he might need to keep his babies flying might be a problem. At some point, you might need to replace something bigger than a piston – something say like a wing?

“So, in storage and in pieces are complete airplanes. They were acquired the same time the ones you have seen were and were here to provide a parts bin to keep the others flying. Thing is, our fabricators managed to do that without ever having to raid this place for so much as a screw.”

“So,” Harry said, “what you’re saying is we have all we need to put together more planes?”

Mr. Jennings nodded. “A lot more planes, Harry. Your Granddad did not skimp on his hobby. With the exception of his Mosquitoes and the Hudsons, you have all you need to triple the number of planes in each category. In the case of the Dakotas and Tiger Moths, you could quadruple them.”

“Whoa! How ... how long ... er ... how much would it take?”

“During the last Wizards War in Britain, your Great-granddad and Granddad both felt we either might have to defend ourselves or intervene. The bad guys can’t get to us. But with these, we can get to them. These things fly higher and faster than any broom known. The Duke had a study done to see just how large and Air Force he could have and how quick. Turned out, the planes are not the problem. With the elves we have and the people who help out, we could assemble all of these planes in twelve to eighteen months. But that would mean the planes we do have could not be flown as we would not be able to maintain them. Assuming we could get a lot more elves...”

“That might not be a problem,” Harry said. “There’s about a hundred in need of works as it now stands. And I’ve been told that many who are employed consider themselves underemployed.”

“ Anyway, with current staff and assuming large scale flight operations with the existing planes, figure two years. With a much larger staff? We could – in theory, of course – build two to three Tiger Moths per week and three Spitfires or Hawkers. At the same time, we could roll out two Dakotas or Bostons every ten days and one Lanc every two weeks. In probably less time for a woman to carry their baby to term, we could have all these planes put together and flying.”

“Whoa! Why didn’t you?”

“Our problem was never planes, Harry. It’s always been aircrew. Even with the upgrades we can do in avionics, it’s aircrew. The Lancs needed seven men during the War. If we forgo the need for gunners, modern equipment can drop that to three: a pilot, flight engineer/navigator and bomb aimer. That’s seventy-two right there. The Bostons are the same. The Dakotas are as well as they need a crew chief even with the technology. It’s close to three hundred aircrew. While a lot of the ground crew could be elves, we figured we’d need over seven hundred witches and wizards to fully man the expanded Air Force. That says nothing about an Army or anything else. I take it you’re thinking about the current troubles in Britain?”

“Assuming we could do this, what would it give us?” Harry asked.

“Three squadrons of Lancaster Heavy Bombers, three Squadrons of Boston Light Bombers, four Squadrons of Dakotas – although you don’t need those to defend the country. They’d only be of use in those numbers for doing something abroad. You’d also have three squadrons of Spitfires and Typhoons.”

“Let’s assume we were going to do something abroad...”

“Only the Lancs and Dakotas have the range to hit almost anything from here. The Bostons could take you to the Midlands, maybe, but no further north. As for the Spits and Typhoons? Maybe the

southwest of England and southern Ireland and even then, they'd be there and have to turn back immediately or risk running out of fuel, and that assumes they fly out of Port of Darby, not here. Even if they could reach, we don't have any munitions!"

Harry nodded. "We barely have the what, we don't even have the who; it's a bit early to worry about the how or where right now. What do I need to do to get this started?"

"It's your stuff, Milord. We'd need help, but...just say the word."

"I want the trainers first. I'll find the pilots and the others, as well as the folks for an Army."

"We don't have the population," Mr. Jennings protested.

"Let me worry about that," Harry said as reassuringly as he could. "But I'd rather have the planes and not need them, then not have them when they're needed. Get the trainers ready first. If it can be done, I'd like the rest ready by the end of next year."

"At least you don't want this done tomorrow," Mr. Jennings replied. "May I ask why? I mean aside from the troubles across the water."

"You may ask," Harry said, "but unless and until I am certain we can do what I have in mind, there's really no point in answering. It may come to nothing in the end. I just don't know yet."

"Yes, Milord," Mr. Jennings replied.

SATURDAY, JULY 13th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell.

Dudley and Clara had gone to the building where he lived. She suggested she wait in the courtyard for him, even though he did invite her up. She said they had just met and she did not want people, especially his parents, thinking there was anything – not so innocent – going on. He whole heartedly agreed, although deep down he thought that one day being more than friends might be a good thing. As soon as he returned, she took him down to High Street and they



window shopped. In reality, she was pointing out just how unmagical a lot of life here was. There were magical shops. She pointed out the Wand Maker and a place for potions equipment and ingredients and a few others. But most of the shops were “normal.” Dudley was at first surprised to see a computer store, but soon passing by shops he would expect to see back in Britain was not so surprising. They soon found themselves on Front Street along the harbor. There were shops dedicated to the fishing industry, including the fish market, but she led him to a nice restaurant that had outside seating so they could sit, talk and look at the water.

“Can I ask you something, Clara?”

“Sure?”

“If you have magic here, why technology?”

“Oh. I suppose you might think we have no need for it or something.”

Dudley nodded.

She pulled out her wand. “This is just a tool, Dudley. You ever see those electric tools that have end bits you can change to do different sorts of things?”

Dudley nodded.

“In a way, that’s all this is. My magic is like the battery. Through training, I can use my mind to change the end bit to do what I want. But, it takes years and years to get really good with a wand. You could use that electric tool practically right out of the box. You could turn a light on as soon as you were tall enough to reach the switch. It took me months to be able to do that with this; at least to have a light that lasted more than a few seconds. We spend seven years in school just learning how to use this so we can function with magic. To actually work with it takes even longer.

“We use technology where it is easier or better or less annoying than the magical alternative. Most forms of magical travel are faster than cars, but few of us like it. So we only use it when we need to get somewhere fast. Otherwise, we take the train, or a car or bus or walk or bike. We have to take planes or ships to get to Britain. It’s too far for most magical travel and to allow the type that can get there would allow magicals from there to get here, and we don’t want them popping around for tea whenever it suits them. We don’t like them that much.”

Dudley chuckled. “Okay, but what about blokes like me? Bet we get the worst jobs.”

“Most jobs don’t need magic. My dad works on airplanes at the old air base, just as his dad did. He might use magic to take the engine off a plane because it is faster and less dangerous than the non-magical way. But he uses a wrench and screwdriver and whatever to actually work on the engine. Same’s true with the fishing fleet. They have magic, but it is seldom better than the non-magical way. There are some jobs where you have to be magical. Magical Healing is one. That’s one area where we still enjoy a bit of an edge over non-magicals. But we also have Healers and Doctors who went to non-magical medical school because that rounds out treating people. Warding – that’s the art that keeps us ‘off the maps’ among other things is strictly magical.

“We tend to do construction that way too. Not because magic is better. But it is faster. You heard they’re building a new city?”

Dudley nodded. “My dad’s company is going to have a plant there.”

“Well, it’s on the South Coast, about thirty miles from here or so. It’s right on the beach. Anyway, when I came back from school three weeks ago, they had not even started yet. All that was there was a road. Now the railroad is already there and beyond and buildings are going up so fast that it’s said it will be ready for people by the end of August, if not sooner. That’s where magic helps. But the construction manager is not magical at all. Don’t think the architect is either. See?

“In Britain, the magicals use their wands for everything. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if they magic their mess away rather than use bog rolls.”

Dudley laughed at that.

“We think they’re lazy. The biggest insult you can say to someone here is ‘you’re so British.’ Nothing good ever came from living there. By that we mean magical Britain, of course.”

“Of course,” Dudley said.

“Here,” Clara continued, “we are all Charenwellians. Makes no difference whether you’re magical or not. All of us have non-magical ancestors if you go back far enough and we are proud of that. There, if you’re in magical Britain, you might live your whole life without ever knowing anything about non-magical Britain and the ignorant fools are proud of that. I may not be a huge football fan, but Daddy is. He hates going into magical Britain when he takes me to school ‘cause he can’t keep up with the scores.”

“Doesn’t sound so bad here,” Dudley thought.

“I don’t know anyone who does not like it here,” Clara said. “We’re part of non-magical Britain in a way. Our Duke is our Head of State, but his rule is derived from the British Crown and Her Majesty and her family comes here every year for Holiday. It has the advantage for them that our press pretty much leaves them alone and their press can’t come here at all. She’s here now, you know.”

“The Queen? Here?”

“Well, not in Pottersport. She has an estate on the South Coast. But she and her family arrived yesterday. She will be here tomorrow, though.”

“Really?”

Clara nodded. "Up at Government House..."

"Where?"

"The Castle."

"Why?"

"Well, she was unable to attend the investiture of our new Duke two weeks ago. I so wanted to go, but Daddy couldn't get tickets. They're free, you know. But everyone wanted to be there and they only could admit ten thousand or so and they had to have people from all over, not just Pottersport..."

"Anyway, the Duke became Duke and his wife became a Duchess and the British Ambassador was there to Knight them and a couple of others for services to the Crown. Tomorrow, the Queen will preside when his other wife becomes a Countess and three others get knighted."

"Other wife? He has two?"

"Consorts. An ancient law. Because of an inheritance that made him the head of two very ancient houses with roots in Britain and magical Britain dating back to King Arthur..."

"He was real?"

"Of course. He's myth in most places because that was during the Dark Ages and he apparently did not get on with the Bishops so they didn't see fit to write about him. He was tight with Merlin, so we magicals did. Anyway, there is an obscure law still on the books here and in magical Britain that if you come to head two such lines, you can take a wife to bear the heir to preserve each such line."

"Lucky bloke," Dudley said.

“Really? A girl expects attention, can get moody and cranky and weepy for reasons a boy can’t understand and can nag and complain and all that. Would you want two?”

“No,” Dudley said. “One would be enough. And if I was really lucky, I’d get one who either wasn’t like that or who I didn’t mind when she was. In which case, getting another would really be pushing it.”

Clara smiled.

“So this Duke is like a King?”

Clara nodded. “We have a High Council which is like the Parliament in Britain. We have the Lord Mayor, who’s like your Prime Minister and he has various Ministries under him. They are both elected. We have a separate court, headed by the High Chancellor who is recommended by the Lord Mayor and appointed by our Duke. Then there’s our Duke. His role is limited, but perhaps not as much as the Queen’s. After all, he owns most of the land in this country and that gives him a lot of say as to how it’s used. But he cannot make laws or see them enforced. His biggest role is only he can ratify a treaty or agree to a declaration of war.”

“He must be as stiff as the British royals. Dad’s always on about them,” Dudley said.

Clara shrugged. “I haven’t met him. He lived most of his life abroad for some reason. I do know his parents were assassinated.”

“Ouch!”

“He was a baby then. His Mum was killed in front of him.”

“That’s not right.”

“No, it’s not. He finally returned home – or came home ‘cause I think he was born abroad as well – he finally came home three weeks ago. People who have met him say he’s really a nice kid. Doesn’t act at all like he’s special or nothing.”

“Kid?”

“He’s almost sixteen.”

“Wait! He’s fifteen and has two wives? How long has he been married?”

“A few weeks at most,” Clara said. “Some think he did it to avoid throngs of fan girls,” she added conspiratorially. “So, Dudley, would you like to see him?”

“Why? I’m not into being a Duchess and ...”

Clara laughed. “I didn’t mean like that. That was funny! No silly. Daddy’s got tickets to tomorrows even up at Government House. I was wondering if you’d like to come with me?”

“Really?”

Clara nodded. “It’s not that big a deal. We go, stand in the crowd, watch the Duke arrive and the Queen listen to speeches and then have a big meal in the Castle Courtyard, unless we get lucky.”

“Lucky?”

“Do you have a nice suit?”

Dudley nodded.

“Well, the Royal Banquette and Ball is for invited guests mostly. But the custom here is several regular people like you and me get to go as well. There’s a lottery and we find out when we get to the Castle. It’s a long shot, but everyone has a chance to go. It’s really popular here.”

Dudley thought about it for a moment. On the one hand, he didn’t like those sort of things. His Mum and Dad would be over the moon to go, even though his Dad hated royals. He just didn’t like getting all

dressed up nor going to see someone he would never really meet and who was not on a sports stage or in a rock band. On the other, however, he was really beginning to like Clara and could tell she really wanted him to go with her. "Sure," he said.

SATURDAY, JULY 13th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry entered the Manor with his "street clothes" in his arms. "Dobby?" he called.

"The Great Harry Potter calls Dobby?" a voice said. The Elf looked nothing like a House Elf, but the features and attitude were pure Dobby. Harry smiled. "Has His Lordship had a fine day?"

"Have indeed."

"And what is his Lordship wearing? Dobby is sure that neither Lady Dora nor Ladies Astoria or Daphne picked those. Or would have picked those, come to think of it."

Harry chuckled. "Nope. But do take care of what they did pick," he said handing Dobby his bundle. "Now where are my Ladies?"

"Ladies Daphne and Astoria have finally managed to take Ladies Minerva and Mallory shopping. If history is to judge, the elders will return all grouching about the experience, but privately will have loved at least the results. Ladies Hermione, Luna, Dora, Ginny and Stacey are in the Library trying to finish their books. House Longbottom is there as well and Mr. Remus, Sir."

"Thanks Dobby."

Harry was still wearing his "flying kit" (less parachute), although he now had the stripes of a Flying Officer on the shoulders of his coveralls (hidden beneath his leather flight jacket) and an Officer's Cap on his head. His plan was to see if girls really did fall for men in uniform, but with the Longbottoms and Remus in the Library, the evidence of that would have to wait. Still, he wondered about the reaction his current attire would get as he entered the Library. The

girls were gathered around a table and had not noticed him enter. He walked over, unnoticed, sat at a chair at the table, placed his feet up on it (knowing at least that would get a reaction out of Hermione), leaned back with his hands behind his head and waited all of two second.

Hermione seemed to be the first to notice him, or rather his feet on the table. "Harry! Get your feet off ... and just what is that get up your wearing?"

Harry took his feet off the table with a mischievous smirk. "This? Just something I threw on."

"I know for a fact there was nothing like that in the closet. I'm sure the fashion twins would find it revolting. You look like something out of an old movie. What were you doing? Rummaging around the attic?"

"So much for that idea," Harry grumbled.

"Excuse me?"

"I heard that women find men in uniform very sexy. Obviously I was mistaken."

"We all find you very sexy, Harry," Ginny said.

"You don't need fancy clothes to warm us up," Stacey added. "But I think you look dashing."

"Thanks. It's nice to know this was not wasted entirely."

"Still Harry," Hermione said. "Just what are you wearing?"

"Flight suit."

"Never seen Quidditch robes like that," Ginny commented.



“Not broom flight, airplanes! Flying Officer Harry Potter, Royal Duchy of Charenwell Air Force at your service!” Harry added a salute for emphasis.

“Are you mad? What Air Force?” Hermione asked.

“Our Air Force,” Remus said walking over. He turned to Harry. “I see you finally found the time to visit our base, Flying Officer Potter.”

“Sure did, Moony. It was brilliant. I soloed this morning!”

“Tut, tut, Flying Officer Potter. Proper respect for senior ranks is expected. Were I in my flying suit you would address me as Group Captain Lupin.”

“Really?” Harry asked. “Sorry. Really Group Captain Lupin Sir?”

Remus chuckled. “Close enough.”

“You fly too?” Harry asked.

“I’ve been one of the pilots since I was about your age, Harry. I’m certified for all the aircraft at the base.”

“What are you talking about?” Hermione asked in mild frustration.

Harry explained about his visit to the base the day before when he was bringing Dora’s car up from Pottersport and how he had gone there today to learn as much as he could about his Grandfather’s rather unique collection. He finished his explanation by describing in detail his first flight in an airplane. “Kind of funny really,” he finished. “The first time I was ever in a plane and I was the one flying it.”

“But Harry,” Hermione said, “how could you fly it all by yourself? Are they mad? It takes a long time to learn to fly, or so I’ve been told.”

“Remember how I learned to drive?” he replied with a smile.

“An elf taught you with magic?” Hermione nodded.

“The mechanics of it. I knew what to do and how to do it. It was fun, really. But the why eludes me. I was told if I ever want to really learn to fly, I have to go to something called ground school and learn the details.”

“He’s right,” Remus said. “We get our pilots to fly with magic, but then they have to learn the rest just like anyone else. Ground school is usually done in the mornings for new pilots. We actually offer several. The basic school is five days a week for four weeks or until you complete the eighty classroom hours. It is the same kind of course anyone learning to fly for the first time would take. It’s only the in flight instruction that we omit because the Elf magic covers that. To advance beyond the trainers, you need to complete that course and accumulate forty hours flight time in the Tiger Moths. How many did you log today Harry?”

“Two and a half,” Harry said.

“After you complete basic flight training, we have advanced ground school classes in instrument flying, so you can fly in all weather, and navigation as well as a course on each of the other aircraft in our inventory. To certify in the other aircraft, you need to complete the advanced ground school and the aircraft specific course and log at least forty hours in that aircraft. Are you thinking of going forward with your flying, Harry?”

“Am I? You bet! Hopefully it won’t be just me.”

“Oh?” several voices asked.

“I won’t make any of you do this, but I would like you to,” Harry said. “I know you don’t like brooms, Hermione. But you’re not afraid of flying in a plane are you?”

Hermione shook her head.

“Just come down to the base on Monday and check it out,” Harry said.

“Okay, I’ll check it out,” Hermione replied.

“The same goes for the rest of you,” he added looking at the other four witches, “and Daphne and Astoria too.”

“Harry,” Dora said, “the Auction is Monday.”

“Then Tuesday for you, okay?”

Dora nodded with a smile.

“Is this just a Potter thing,” a new voice asked. Harry turned and saw Neville, “or can any of us check it out?”

“You too, Neville, if you want,” Harry replied, “and your girls as well. And I’ll make the same offer to the Weasleys.”

“Why?” Hermione asked.

“The War,” Harry said. “I was thinking that having an Air Force – a real one – would come in handy. The bad guys no next to nothing about Muggle weapons and don’t think about Muggle airplanes. But airplanes can drop bombs and those things are lethal to wizards as well. We need an army to take back Britain. But an Air Force would provide that Army with massive firepower that the wizards back there cannot counter. They won’t have Fighters or anti-aircraft guns...”

“They have brooms and magic, though,” Hermione said.

“Brooms can’t fly as high or as fast as these planes,” Harry said. “Even if they could, spells might not work too well.”

“Why not?” Stacey asked.

“The range,” Hermione gasped. “They would need to get within twenty meters just to have the spell hit with full effect.”

“And even then they probably won’t be too effective,” Remus nodded. “Spells are not designed to destroy something that big. A blasting curse might get lucky. Most anything else would be useless. A severing charm would barely scratch the skin of a metal airplane. Transfiguration might work, but not on something that large and you have to be even closer. You have to know what to hit as well.”

“But the Killing Curse?” Hermione asked.

“During the last War,” Remus answered, “Duke Charlus and Harry’s Grandfather considered just what Harry is proposing. They were concerned about magical attacks as well. They bought a plane and ran tests to see just how much damage magic could do and whether a wand could bring down a plane. The magical effect of the curse destroys magic and the usual defense is to conjure a solid object – and a plane is a solid object. While the curse can cause damage, it’s actually less effective than a blasting curse. It would take a really lucky shot.”

“Like at the pilot?” Hermione suggested.

“The windscreen would absorb the curse,” Remus said. “It would probably shatter, but the pilot would not be hit. It would take two shots. And Harry was right about the speed. The most anyone would get at a plane is one shot before it’s gone and that assumes the shooter is practically right in front of it as it approaches.”

“And most of the planes have guns,” Harry added. “Unless the shooter was invisible – which is not out of the realm of possibility – fair bet the machine guns would end the duel before it began.”

“But if the planes would have worked and been practically immune from magical counter, why didn’t the last Duke use them?”

“He was not able to find enough pilots to man enough planes to make a difference,” Harry said. “That might be changing.”

“Oh?”

“Remus? The last time were they thinking of using women pilots?”

“No Harry.”

“I am. Although I intend to learn to fly, my Air Force will be mostly women.”

“Why?” Hermione asked.

“By the time we are ready to go to war, and assuming we then need to, many of you will be mothers. Whatever else happens, I do not want to create orphans of my children. I have every intention of living to a ripe old age, but I want you lot to as well. And I know damn well you won’t be the type who’ll sit back and knit and wait for your soldier boy to come home. You’ll want to be part of the fight as well. This is a way you can be a very significant part of the fight, possibly do all kinds of damage to the bad guys, maybe enough that our ground forces really just have to go in and count the bodies, while at the same time you’re relatively safe and our children will not lose their Mum’s.”

Hermione nodded. “I’d rather be at your side, Harry.” The other girls nodded their agreement, “but I’ll think about it for now. At the very least, your idea means we can draw upon the young women of this country too. Still, with everything else we’re doing…”

“We’ll make it work, Hermione,” Harry said. “It’s all just a question of scheduling, isn’t it?”

“We’ll need more planes,” Remus said.

“Granddad already saw to that,” Harry said. “What’s at the base is only a fraction of what we have. We have loads of planes in storage. They’ll need to be put back together and made airworthy, but I was told it can be done. Right now, all we are really lacking are the

aircrews to man those planes. Well that and the weapons. But since we are not about to go off to War anytime soon, we have time to get the planes, train the aircrews and mechanics and find a way to arm our planes. I've already given the order to reassemble the rest of our planes. The girls we have now and will have soon will be the cadre around which our Air Force will be built."

"Now that that's settled for now," Remus said, "I did come over here for a reason, Harry."

"Oh?"

"Mallory informed me your magic is finally unbound," Remus said. "You rate at a 948 making you easily the most magically powerful wizard alive. But as I'm sure you were told, you need to learn to both harness and control that power. Minerva and I want you to begin training on Monday. It will be an hour a day, nothing too strenuous, and will probably last the rest of the summer. We're not going to teach you anything new, just to control your magic with spells you know or should know by now."

"Is this just for Harry," Stacey asked. "I could use some help too. I haven't had a wand in ages."

"The training is mainly for Harry," Remus said, "but I don't see why not."

"Thank you," Stacey said with an eager smile.

"One more thing to add to my schedule," Harry said shaking his head.

"So," Luna said, "do we get to take Harry upstairs to show him how sexy with think he is in his flying suit now, or after dinner?"

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).
2. Mary Ellen Howard Weasley, age 18 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).

2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).



## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX: ROYALS

SUNDAY, JULY 14th, 1996 –Pottersport, Charenwell.

Dudley finished fixing his tie and looked himself over in the mirror. His mother had bought him this suit for his birthday and it was really the first chance he had to wear it. Before yesterday, he had not wanted to ever have a chance to wear it and knew if he did it would be for one of his father's amazingly boring dinners. How eating with people you did not know or like could be good for business was beyond him.

But yesterday he had met Clara and she wanted him dressed nice for today. That was something he was willing to do and he could only hope he lived up to her expectations. He checked his billfold and saw he had twenty pounds in his wallet. He was fairly certain he would not need to pay for anything as Clara said the buffet at the Castle was free and the brunch he was attending would be as well.

He stepped out of the bedroom and headed into the main living portion of the flat hoping to get out the front door without being spotted by either of his parents. His luck was not with him.

"Dudley?" his mother said as he was passing the kitchen. "Why are you wearing your suit?"

"Got a date," he said hoping to escape.

"A date?" he heard his father say. "You hear that! Our lady killer is here barely two days and already has a date! Who's the lucky bird?"

"Just a girl I met in town yesterday."

"And you're all dressed up?" his mother asked.

"She invited me to a fancy brunch," Dudley said. This was partly true. But he knew the suit was for later just in case and not for the brunch.

"Are we going to meet this bird?" his father asked.

“It’s just a date,” Dudley said, “and only a first one.” This was true. It was a bit early to do the meet the parents thing, except that’s exactly what he would be doing in about half an hour with her parents. But as she was a witch, he really did not think it wise for his parents to meet her – ever. She did not need that. “Look, I need to go.”

“Where are you going?”

“To her place to pick her up and then out,” Dudley said.

“And how are you going to get around?” his father asked. “We don’t have a car and I’ve yet to see any public transport.”

Because, Dudley thought, you haven’t left this flat since we arrived and the buses don’t stop on this street. “People walk here,” he said as he reached the door and exited before they could continue the interrogation. Considering his comings and goings back home, he really did not expect them to ask many questions. I should have told them I had a job interview or something.

Walking down High Street a few minutes later, following the directions Clara had given him to her house, he spied a flower stand and stopped to pick up some flowers. He was trying to appear confident, but while his father had some impression he was a lady’s man back home, the truth was this was only the second date he had ever been on and he was nervous. He really didn’t care about the last one. But he didn’t want to blow this one for some reason.

Clara lived on the other side of High Street from where Dudley’s family was staying and about four blocks up from the waterfront. He found the place without difficulty. Her family lived in a building not unlike the one Dudley now called home, but they were in a first floor flat. Hiding the flowers he had bought behind his back, he knocked on the door and a man answered. Dudley guessed that this was Clara’s father.

“You must be the Dudley chap from across the water,” the man said. “Clara’s been squirming all morning.”

“Daddy!” and exasperated voice sounded from somewhere in the house nearby yet out of sight.

“Evan Jasper,” the man said. “I’m Clara’s Dad. Or at least I’m her Dad when I’m not embarrassing her to death. Come in.”

Dudley followed the man into a large living area. There were several people there, but he only recognized Clara who beamed when she saw him. He did his best not to blush, failing miserably. Dudley was introduced to the rest of those present. Janet was Clara’s mother, whom he made sure to compliment. Martha was her older sister who had apparently completed Healer training and worked at Mistress Agnes Hospital in town. Richard was an older brother who had finished school and had no idea what to do with his life now. There was an older couple as well: Edgar and Mary Jasper. Edgar was the non-magical, former RAF mechanic Clara had talked about the day before. Dudley knew he and Edgar were the only non-magicals in the room, but the family seemed very normal, arguably more than his own.

He handed his flowers to Clara whose eyes lit up when she saw them. She actually kissed his cheek! Then announced she was going to put them in water as the rest of the family headed to the dining room for brunch. For a time Dudley was bombarded with questions about his life back in Britain and what he thought about his new home. He answered as best he could, without revealing just what a malcontent he had once been and stating that until he met Clara, he really didn’t know what to think of this new place, but now he thought it was very nice. Once the boyfriend grilling was over, the older man began speaking.

“So anyway, as I was saying, Jennings came up after the Duke left and said it’s on.”

“Okay Dad, what do you mean?” Evan asked.

“Well, yesterday our Duke was up at the Base for a look around. Didn’t see him myself as we were tearing down a Merlin, but

apparently the Duke took one of the Tiger Moths up for a spin and had a good enough time with it. Anyway, he landed and immediately began asking loads of questions that led to Jennings taking him out to the old storage hangers.”

“The old RAF Base,” Evan said to Dudley who was confused. “Our last Duke kept it up to house his collection of old warplanes. Dad worked there during the War and still does part time. Old coot loves being up to his elbows in torn down engines. I work there as well in maintenance, although I’m also one of the pilots that shakes the old birds’ out. We’ve got bombers, fighters and some others...”

“I saw them,” Dudley said. “We came across in an old plane and landed there.”

“We have six squadrons of various kinds of aircraft in flying condition,” Evan said. “It’s supposed to be the largest collection of flying World War II aircraft in the world.”

“And for each plane we have at the base,” Edgar said, “the last Duke had at least two more disassembled, boxed up and in storage in case we needed parts. We never had to scavenge parts from storage, so they’re just sitting there and have been for about fifty years. Anyway, Jennings showed the Duke that and the Duke tells him to get cracking. The Duke wants all the other Tiger Moths assembled and flying as soon as possible and then the rest of the lot.”

“You’re kidding!” Evan said.

“Nope. The whole lot of them. Jennings complained we don’t have the pilots or maintenance staff, but the Duke tells Jennings to let him worry about that and says he’s going to be assigning a lot more Elves to the base for the maintenance side. Jennings still has no idea where the Duke is going to dig up pilots. It seems the Duke wants to go full up. We got some sixty pilots and aircrew now and they’re all part timers. Where he’s going to find two-hundred and eighty-eight full time flyers is beyond me. Throw in the ground echelon; we’re needing at least seven hundred, not counting the elves or a training staff!”

“How soon?” Evan asked.

“End of next year at the latest,” Edgar said.

“Well at least it’s not end of next week. You think this has anything to do with the troubles back in Britain?”

“What else could it be?”

“Troubles?” Dudley asked.

“You’re not magical, are ye’ lad.” Edgar stated. Dudley shook his head. “Fair bet ye’ don’t read the magical papers back home. I know I never even knew of them ‘til I came here. Anyway, seems the troubles from ‘bout fifteen years ago are back. The British magicals are at the brink of another civil war with each other.”

“Another civil war?”

“Seems that way. Then again, maybe it’s the first one all over again after a fifteen year Holiday. Players are same enough. The game began in 1971, or at least it became known then. Seems there was this right evil chappie who called himself Voldemort, don’t ask me why or what his real name was – or is for that matter – but he was on nasty piece of work. He was a mass murderer plain and simple. He also believed that wizards were a super race of mortal, certain wizards were superior to all others by virtue of being aristocrats and believing in their heritage and right to superiority and he was superior to all and destined to rule all. He would be the supreme ruler with a ruling class of despots below him to handle the details. The rest of the magical race was to be the ruled, unless they had a non-magical parent. He believed non-magicals were animals deserving to be his new order’s beasts of burden and those magical born from such beasts were unnatural abominations in need of extermination. Basically, he was a right nutter who also happened to be a stone cold killer and scary powerful wizard. Made Hitler look like a kindly man in comparison. Not a good combination.

“By '71, Voldemort had gathered a following mostly in Britain and mostly comprised of sociopathic killers who were mostly from the British magical aristocracy. They were called ‘Death Eaters’ which sounds more like a suicide squad than a group who got off killing people just ‘cause they could. To join, you had to kill – usually non-magicals – and you had to show it meant nothing to you. Hitler’s SS looked compassionate compared with those bastards. Their goal was to take over magical Britain as their first step to taking over the entire magical world and then destroying or enslaving the rest of the human race. Not a nice group of people.

“So this Voldemort chappie and his sick friends started causing trouble both in the magical and non-magical world. On your side of that fence, the trouble was blamed on accidents or terrorists and it’s a fair bet that more than a few magical terror attacks were blamed on the IRA. It would be a few years before Her Majesty’s Government figured out the truth, and even then there were not many cleared to know the truth. There was a genuine concern that direct intervention would only escalate things and allowing the general population to know that magic was real would either have the government officials claiming such nonsense committed or might lead to a return to the Middle Ages with witch burnings or worse.

“The magical government in Britain was even more useless, although for different reasons. Their legislative body is hereditary. Thus, those tasked to govern came from the same social class as the Death Eaters. A few might actually have been Death Eaters, but others either had family in the ranks or were at least somewhat sympathetic to the then stated cause. Besides, to take decisive action would have wiped out whole lines and seats would either be empty or become filled by wizards from the lower social classes and they couldn’t have that, could they?” Edgar added sarcastically.

“It’s different here,” Clara said. “Our government is elected and being magical is not a job requirement. Granddad served on the High Council for years.”

“Did anyone in Britain try and do anything?” Dudley asked.

Edgar nodded. "There was a group that did in the beginning. Kept the Death Eaters from walking in they did until the magical government woke up and realized the bastards would line them up against the wall once they took over. Still, the Death Eaters came really close to winning. Would have won had their leader not copped it. It seems as an organization, they were nothing without the bastard."

"So what did we do during this?" Dudley asked not realizing he used the term "we."

"Wasn't 'til around '77 that we knew just how bad things were. The magical government kept a lid on things in the press there. Didn't want to admit there even was a problem. All our government had before then were rumors and unconfirmed information from our own intelligence folks. Now as before, however, our magical children get their magical education abroad, mostly in Britain. (That's something our new Duke is of a mind to change). Thus, it was only a matter of time before something happened that involved our people. In the summer of '77, the Death Eaters attacked the largest magical shopping district in Britain which is somewhere in London. It was during the back-to-school shopping time and while most of our families do that shopping here, some do not. About seven of our citizens died in that attack. Needless to say we now sat up and took notice.

"Problem was at the time that was about all we could do. We don't really have an Army, just a group of men who parade around in ceremonies. We have warplanes, but that's more of a flying club than a military organization. Our country is protected by powerful magical wards. Our enemies can't find us and even if they could, if they're magical and even try to come here, they'll die crossing our magical boundary. We never needed a military and what passes for one is in honor of our sons who answered the call of the Crown in the past to defend the British (non-magical) Empire, not to defend Charenwell directly.

"Even if we had a military, there would have been difficulties. We have good relations with Her Majesty's government; always have in fact. But we are another country and to send our troops there without

an invite would be considered an invasion. We have no relations with the magical government of Britain. Broke those off over four hundred years ago.”

“Why?”

“Two reasons. First of all our Duke has a hereditary seat in their legislature. His office is our primary source of intelligence. As such, we used that office for our purposes. To be honest, we don’t trust their ruling class at all and made a decision long ago that they not know of us. Anyway, as we have no relations with them, even if Her Majesty invited our help, our magical cousins would see our involvement as an invasion. At that time, we lacked the ability, need or desire to declare war on Magical Britain. We watched, planned and hoped they’d sort it out themselves.

“Now this brings us to the story of our current Duke and how that war ended the last time. In 1978, our Duke was Charlus II. His son Charles served in the RAF during World War II and was heir. Charles had a son named James, who was attending school in Britain. Place called Hogwarts. In ’78, Charlus was murdered in Diagon Alley following a session of the Wizengamot where he proposed harsh measures for dealing with the Death Eater. James was finishing Hogwarts and immediately joined an organization that was fighting the Death Eaters. It may have been because of what happened to his Grandfather. It may have also been because his Wife and Consort was a First Generation witch born and raised in England.

“In late July 1980, James and his wife had a son. The lad was born in Britain and at the time we now know James and his family were in hiding ‘cause the Death Eaters made the murder of his family a top priority. Duke Charles tried to have them returned home, but was rebuffed by the British Magical Government. On Halloween night, 1981, Voldemort attacked their hiding place. James and his wife were murdered. Our Duke – just a baby at the time – survived and for some reason, Voldemort was destroyed. Now the British magicals believe the baby killed the evil bastard. Rubbish! But those superstitious idiots will believe anything. Needless to say, the baby was a national hero and they were not about to let their hero move



away. It wasn't until recently we learned what happened. The Head of their Wizengamot took it upon himself to keep their symbol in Britain. He ignored the Will of the boy's parents and the demands from our government to return our heir to his homeland and placed the boy with the non-magical relations of the boy's mother. The boy vanished without a trace for years.

“He resurfaced in the late summer of 1991 when he started Hogwarts. But again, all efforts to repatriate the boy were rebuffed. By then, Charles had died and we had no reigning Duke. The Lord Mayor acted as Steward, but lacked certain powers that might have forced the issue. Just recently, the Steward authorized a covert operation to get our Duke back. It was planned and organized by Lord Black, a British magical who was close, personal friends with the boy's parents and our Lord Mayor and executed by friends and concubines of the Black and Potter Houses.”

“Concubines?” Dudley asked.

“For some reason, Magical Britain has far more witches and wizards. Long ago it was the norm in the magical world to arrange for a witch to be bound to a wizard so that the magical race could survive and thrive. The magical bond was to prevent the witch from leaving our society and disappearing into the non-magical world. In Britain, it became perverted. Young witches with a non-magical parent are sold into virtual slavery every year there. Most are treated as little more than slaves and often worse. A few buyers, however, remember the ancient knowledge and remember that the concubine is to be part of their family for life, to aid and assist it and bear the next generation alongside the wife and Consort as near equal in all things. Our Dukes historically have maintained the ancient tradition, being as they are part of both countries. The Ducal Concubines have historically been very accomplished women whose contributions to this country cannot be measured. They founded hospitals, libraries, and our primary school system. They have been elected to high office and served on our courts. They are revered here which is quite unlike their status in Magical Britain where they are the lowest rung in that social order.

“It is said that every witch or wizard born here in Charenwell is descended from a distant Duke through either his Consort or one of his Concubines. Our present Duke’s Great-great grandmother was the Concubine of the Duke. I, of course, cannot claim that connection as I am not magical. But Clara has Ducal Concubines in her magical ancestors.”

“I’ve been told that the new Duke has two Consorts,” Dudley said. “He doesn’t have any Concubines, does he?”

Edgar and the others nodded. “He inherited one from the last Duke,” Edgar said. “She’s been an educator both here and in magical Britain for ages and is now heading up the Duke’s project to open magical schools here in Charenwell. About a month ago, our Duke and Lord Black (and others) fought in a pitched battle against the resurgent Death Eater movement in Britain – that being the current troubles. Lord Black was killed and our Duke was named his Heir as well. He inherited two women from Lord Black. One is named Mallory and she’s both a Healer and non-magical Doctor working at the hospital here in town. The other’s named Dora and is a combat trained witch who now heads security for the Duke’s estate. He acquired two others who were apparently forced into bondage by the Death Eaters who thought one of their own was to be the next Lord Black. They are about your and Clara’s age.”

“Daphne and Astoria,” Janet (Clara’s mother) said. “They’re sisters. Daphne is sixteen and Astoria is fourteen. I’ve met them on more than one occasion in the past couple of weeks and they’re here in town almost every day. They do spend time shopping, as the Duke arrived here practically with just the clothes on his back and there have been some friends of his who have relocated here with even less. However, those two girls probably spend more time meeting and talking with people. Very engaging, those two and they’re becoming quite popular. Our new Duke did not even know of his own country until he arrived here, much less that he was destined to become our Duke. His ancestors spent years, even decades in the wings as it were learning all they could. He and his Consorts have been trying to learn it all in but a few weeks so we seldom see him out and about.

Daphne and Astoria have become the public faces of Houses Potter and Black.”

“Potter?” Dudley asked almost choking on a Danish. “You’re Duke wouldn’t be named Harry Potter, would he? You don’t have a picture of him, do you?”

“He would be,” Clara said, “and we do.” She got up and left the room for a moment, returning with a newspaper from a couple of weeks earlier with a picture of the Duke and Duchess dominating the front page. Dudley looked at it and began to laugh. “What is it, Dudley?” Clara asked. “What’s so funny?”

Dudley regained some control. “Remember about my wizard cousin my parents hate and I was mean to when I was younger?”

Clara nodded.

“My parents are so going to freak when they find out,” he chuckled. He pointed to the picture on the paper and said. “That’s my cousin!”

SUNDAY, JULY 14th, 1996 – Government House, Pottersport, Charenwell.

Hermione was trying not to become a nervous wreck. She stood at a mirror in a large tent erected before the towering walls of Potter Castle, not unlike two weeks earlier. She wore another deep blue gown, as it was the color of her House, and the diamonds Harry had given her only a couple of days earlier. The sash of the Order of the Round Table crossed her front and once again, the tiara of the Duchess graced her head and done up hair. She had to admit she looked elegant and knew her parents would be thrilled with the pictures, but that did little to calm her nerves. Nearby, the House Potter Concubines were also finishing. Their gowns were of a lighter shade of blue and they too wore Harry’s gifts, along with diamond studded head bands to hold their hair.

Luna was having the finishing touches done as well. As the House Black Consort (and soon to be Countess of Darby), she wore an

emerald green gown, a different style of tiara, and Harry's diamonds. Her House Concubines were in gowns of a lighter shade, and like the others had on their gifts from Harry and the diamond headbands. If nothing else, Hermione thought, we at least will look like we belong here. Luna, of course, looked like there was nothing of interest about to happen. Nothing seemed to make that girl outwardly nervous, Hermione thought trying to keep her knees from shaking.

Stacey looked both elegant and terrified. Hermione stepped up to one of her newest sisters. "You okay?" she asked.

"This is all so much," Stacey said in a very nervous tone. "This time last week I was a ..."

"Shhhh," Hermione whispered softly. "That was another life, Stacey, another lifetime. Today you're Stacey Marie Potter-Black, a Lady of House Potter and the Wife of Harry Potter, Duke of Charenwell. It should be as much their honor to meet you as it is your honor to meet them."

Stacey seemed to relax. "You must do this a lot," she said softly.

"Including today," Hermione replied, "this is my second time. Thinking that is what keeps me from losing my breakfast."

Stacey chuckled slightly. "Thanks Hermione. For Harry then?"

"For Harry."

"Ladies?" a voice called and Hermione could see it was the senior Elf Maiden who had overseen their hair styling, "it is time."

Hermione headed for the exit to the tent with the rest of the Potter Ladies following in order of "seniority," from the longest bound to the shortest, thus it was Ginny bringing up the rear as she was technically junior to Stacey as a Potter Lady by a little over forty-five minutes. Luna and the Black Ladies were behind her. The procession left their changing tend, crossed a short space of open lawn and entered into a much larger tent that was already filled with people.

Harry was waiting for her and the others near where she entered dressed in a black dinner jacket and white tie, with his Order of the Round Table sash beneath the jacket, as was custom and his Order of the Round Table medallion and Order of The British Empire pinned on his chest and lapel in plain view. Hermione thought he looked amazing.

She recognized the others already gathered, or at least most of them. The three Weasley brothers were present, in nice suits and their ladies in nice dresses. Neville was dressed not unlike Harry and Susan and Amber were both dressed in scarlet, the color of House Longbottom. Neville and Dora's parents were there, as was Ms. Cissy Black. Hermione had been told she was released from the hospital just that morning. There were several others, all dressed very nicely, present. For now, the group was allowed to mingle with the guests and Hermione learned that not three, but four of the girls how had been brought from Britain as Concubines were actually from Charenwell. While they still remained bound to the three Weasley brothers (as Danielle Carter was the fourth and bound to Bill Weasley), today they were being reunited with the families that had lost them. Hermione was surprised at how grateful the families seemed to be. It was clear they were incensed that their daughters were taken. But they praised their Duke for finding a way to bring them home. Hermione didn't feel it was necessary to point out that it was just dumb luck that had placed the girls in a situation where they could be brought home.

Bill and Fleur had been talking with the family Samantha Johnson, a Charenwell girl who had been abducted through auction last year. It could have been a very difficult situation given that their little girl was now bound to Bill as a concubine, but one would not have known that by the reception. Bill was treated as if he had rescued the girl personally from captivity and practically declared an honored member of the family. In a way, Bill was grateful he wasn't one of his brothers. Fred's concubines and one of George's were also Charenwellian and they had been missing for much longer: between four and six years. Those families practically smothered the twins with their thanks.

“Bill?” Fleur asked. Bill saw her discreetly pointing. He followed her point and saw a young woman in a blue gown with long, brilliant red hair standing by herself and taking things in.

“That can’t be Ginny,” he said. He took Fleur by the hand and walked over. “Ginny?” he asked.

“Oh. Hi Bill,” she replied with a smile.

“Has anyone told you how beautiful you look?”

She nodded. “Harry did a moment ago,” she said with a blush. “But he said it to each of us... Really?”

“It’s a good thing you’re bound to Harry, Sis,” Bill chuckled. “You’d have to beat the boys off with a stick.”

“You look quite elegant,” Fleur said. “Quite the lady.”

“Thanks.”

“And the jewelry?”

“Harry had it made. We all got our own sets,” she said. “I think it’s really a bit much, but...”

“It looks perfect on you,” Fleur said.

“That can’t be our little sister,” a voice said. Fred and George walked over with Alicia and Angelina.

“Definitely going to need a bunch of pictures,” Fred said.

“Indeed. Who would have thought one of us was that good looking,” George added.

“You do look wonderful, Gin,” Alicia said.

Ginny had never really been that girly to care in the past. She blushed furiously for it was perhaps the first time the twins had complimented her on something other than mischief or Quidditch. "Well," she finally said, "you can thank Arie the Elf Maiden for the Hair, Harry for the jewels and smile I guess and the shopping twins for the dress."

"Shopping twins?" Fleur asked.

"Daphne and Astoria," Ginny said. "It's a pain going shopping with them. My feet really hurt in the end, but they helped me get some wonderful clothes."

Fleur saw her left hand and held it up. "He gave you these?" she asked looking at the rings.

Ginny nodded. "We're his family and he wants the world to know it."

"You do realize he's saying you're his wife," Fleur continued.

Ginny nodded. "That's what he said as well. Funny when you think of it. Mum kind of got what she wanted, didn't she?"

"Except you're no longer an expendable baby factory," Bill said.

"The expendable part is true," Ginny said. "Harry would never treat us like that. But the other bit is more of a we'll see. That's up to me, really."

"You're not preggers, are you?" Fred asked in shock.

Ginny smiled. "No Fred. I hope so soon, but not yet."

"Not yet?"

"Been thinking," Ginny grinned evilly. "I really want to stick it to Mum. So I want lots of pictures of all of us today. Then, around December, I want one of me with a very obvious baby bump and to send her

copies for Christmas with a big thank you for being such a bitch we had to leave and find a wonderful life.”

“Evil,” Fred said.

“And maybe,” Angelina added, “we could really make it a group photo of all the Weasley girls in a family way.”

“How is that getting even?” Fleur asked. “Not that I mind the idea but ... she did want her daughter dead.”

“We don’t know what she really wanted,” Ginny said. “She may have thought that was far enough ahead that she need not worry about Dumbledore. Then again, she might really be licking the nasties on his backside...”

“That’s an image I did not need,” Fred moaned.

“But until recently, she was all about family,” Ginny continued. “I don’t think it was an act. Seeing grandbabies she’ll never meet will crush her.”

“This can’t be our little Dora,” Ted Tonks said looking at the brown haired young woman before him in the pale green gown, the sash of the Order of the Round Table, and diamonds. “What happened to jeans and the spiked hair?”

“Hi Daddy,” Dora replied. “The hair can’t happen when Harry’s around. As for the clothes, the fashion twins would kill me if I dressed like that.”

“You really look lovely dear,” Andy said.

“Thanks,” Dora replied with a smile.

“I’d like to introduce you to my sister, your Aunt Cissy,” Andy said.

“It’s good to meet you.” Cissy said somewhat formally.



“It’s good to see you up and around, Aunt Cissy,” Dora said as pleasantly as she could.

“Could you explain something to me?” Cissy asked. “Erm – just what are the relationships here?”

“Ah,” Dora said. “Did Daddy or Mum tell you what happened to me?”

Cissy shook her head.

“The lovely head of House Black,” Andy said with disgust, “decided that our House could not have a child with her parentage. Ted was forced to sell interest in her before she was born. She was given to Cousin Sirius – or at least her paper was – as a fourteenth birthday present.”

“I was bound to Sirius by proxy about nine years ago,” Dora said. “I was twelve at the time. Such a lovely society doing that to young girls simply because they can.”

Narcissa paled. “I – I didn’t know, Dora.”

Dora shrugged. “So when Sirius died, I became the property of his heir. Harry took it pretty well under the circumstances. He finds the whole business repugnant.”

“And yet he...” Narcissa began. She knew her husband kept concubines for entertainments.

“We are his wives for all practical purposes,” Dora said. “We are his partners in all things, not his slaves or property or worse ...toys. I am now legally Lady Dame Dora Black-Potter, primarily bound to House Black and secondarily to House Potter. Lady Luna Black,” she said pointing out Luna, “is Harry’s Consort and the Countess of Darby designate. His other Blacks are Lady Healer Mallory Black-Potter and Lady Daphne Black-Potter. Our children will be the children of the restored House of Black.”

“Restored?” Cissy said.

“The old House was all about Blood Purity. None of the next generation will be Purebloods. Luna and Daphne are, but Harry is not. Mallory is a Muggle Born and I am a Half-Blood. So much for the old motto, eh?”

“I suppose. And the others?”

“The ladies in blue are House Potter,” Dora said. “Lady Dame Hermione Potter is the Duchess of Charenwell and Consort. The others are Lady Professor Minerva Potter-Black...”

“P-Professor McGonagall is a...” Cissy started.

“She’s been bound to House Potter for over fifty years,” Dora nodded. “Next there’s Lady Astoria Potter-Black, Lady Stacey Potter-Black and finally Lady Ginevra Potter-Black, although we all call her Ginny.”

“She’s the one from the Will reading,” Cissy said. “She looks surprisingly happy. Are those her brothers with her?”

Dora nodded. “They are not ashamed of their sister. What happened fell squarely on the mother we’ve learned. Ginny is quite happy in many ways. I guess that applies to each of us. You see Stacey over there?” Dora asked indicating the young woman in a blue gown taking with several others not in similar attire.

Cissy nodded.

“She belonged to Lucius Malfoy as did a few of the other women in this room. I do hope you had no idea about how her life was as Lucius’s little pet. I’m sure you’ve heard the horror stories of what the life of a British Concubine can be like, particularly a Muggle Born witch bound to a Pureblood arse like Lucius. I can assure you her life until a few days ago was that horror story. She knew her time with Lucius was up. He only kept his slaves for three years. She was certain he was going to dispose of her. It turns out killing his used

toys was not one of Lucius's predilections. But she and the others, imprisoned naked in a dank dungeon for years and allowed out only for sexual entertainments, left without clothes wands or names for that matter, had been led to believe when he tired of them they would be killed."

Dora could not tell exactly what expression was on Cissy's face as she told the woman of her husband's behavior. It was a mixture. There was shock, disgust, resignation perhaps, and when she looked over at Stacey who was smiling with her friends, was it sadness or remorse? There were silent tears. Cissy then seemed to steel herself. A look of determination came over her and she silently walked away over to where Stacey was standing with Danielle, Verity, Mary, Samantha and their families; all the young women being victims of one Lucius Malfoy. The Tonks family stood watching in confusion. They watched in shock as she seemed to speak to Stacey and the woman then slapped her hard. Three more blows followed from each of the other young women and Cissy dropped to her knees wailing. The Tonks family soon hurried over as it looked like some of the other guests were getting ready to do worse.

Harry arrived at the same time with Hermione and Luna.

"What's going on?" he asked looking at the scene.

"This thing was married to the man who stole my daughter," a man said indicating Cissy. "She had the nerve to try and apologize!"

"This woman is under my House protection," Harry said.

"After what she has done? How could you?" a woman spat.

"And what has she done?" Harry asked in a calm voice. "She was married off against her will at sixteen to a right bastard of a man she had never met before for the sole purpose of bearing a son. Once she had fulfilled her purpose, her so called husband never spoke to her again outside of their social gatherings, much less acted in any other way one would come to expect from a husband. I'd be surprised if he ever kissed her, and even then more so if he actually meant it.

She has waited patiently for my House to annul her marriage which I did at the first opportunity. Unfortunately, the first opportunity came after she was repeatedly gang raped by her so called son and his goons. In many ways she is as much a victim of that bastard as your daughter was. A different kind of victim, it is true, but a victim none the less. And she has been a victim for over sixteen years. No young woman deserves what happened to your daughter, Sir. Nor does any woman deserve what happened to Cissy here.

“While the bastard Cissy was forced into marriage with is a villain of the lowest sort and a stain on the undergarments of the human race, the real villain in this sick game is the bastard who sold your daughter off. That bastard was not Lucius Malfoy, although what he has done has ensured that his line will be extinguished, but Albus Dumbledore the head of the British Wizengamot who unlawfully claimed the right to sell our girls to line his own pockets after my Grandfather died!”

“What are you going to do about it?” a man asked.

“I have an idea,” Harry said. “It’s already being put into action. But it will be at least two years before it is truly visible. In the end, the criminals shall face justice, one which they have long avoided under their corrupt, immoral and inept government. The sick bastards who make the rules over there don’t see what happens as a problem. They will learn the error of their thinking. The society over there looks the other way as girls are sold into slavery and Muggles are killed for sport. That society shall pay for its arrogance. But the Day of Judgment is not today, Sir. We are not ready to bring down that sick culture. For now, we prepare.”

“War?” a man asked in shock. “But we’ve never...”

“There is no other way, Sir. I’ve demanded the immediate return of our women, even if it means binding them to families here, which by the way is how I got these women back. I’ve demanded reparations to be paid to the victim’s families. I am going to cut off all travel to Britain of any nature with the exception of those necessary for our diplomatic efforts and government missions. I have directed that we seek to redirect our trade away from Britain to the Continent or

elsewhere so that I might use an embargo against them without causing economic disruption here. But I've lived there. I anticipate our demands will fall upon deaf ears and our legitimate concerns scoffed at. They listen to no one but themselves.

"I've been here all of three weeks, Sir. Before I came here, all I wanted was a quiet life, a family who loved me and maybe a dog. I did not want fame, fortune or power. I found I was famous and wealthy – although I had no idea how wealthy. Were it up to me, I would have lived my life, watched my children grow and die with only friends and family to remember me. Unfortunately, that's not what life has thrown at me, is it? The bastards across the way covet power, wealth and fame. They covet it for their own selfish advancement. They rise in government not to see to the betterment of their citizens, but to see solely to their own self aggrandizement, power, social status and wealth. There are well meaning and decent people there. Unfortunately, those kinds of people get thrown under the bus, are the first to die in their infighting and never rise to their potential.

"I can see no solution to their ills, no solution that will occur that might even begin to heal the suffering our people have suffered at their hands, no solution that would see future generations of women in that land not become yet another victimized class, no solution that will punish the vile ones and ensure this never can happen again short of war. I will admit, Sir, I am biased. I've been at war over there practically from the day I turned eleven and learned I was a wizard. I have never known a day's peace as a wizard and cannot see peace as an option over there unless the entire rotten structure is brought crashing to the ground never to rise again.

"I will go to war, Sir, when we are ready. I will go to war for your daughters. I will go to war for my ladies. I will even go to war for Cissy here. I will go to war to see that what has been and is today shall never be again. I shall go to war for the future generations not yet born both here and there. It is the right thing to do. I regret that it is also the only thing to do.

"Come on Cissy," Harry said gently helping the crying woman to her feet who immediately threw herself into Harry's arms sobbing. That

stunned many. When Stacey joined the hug, that stunned the rest for a moment.

It was Neville who began what was as thunderous an applause as the relatively small group of people could make.

“Didn’t see that coming,” Fred said.

“Which bit?” George asked. “The rant or the fact that our little Harry really is a Duke?”

Dudley and the Jaspers rode a bus from High Street up to the entrance to the fortress surrounding the castle. There were several buses running from the Floo Exchange to the castle to bring the guests to this second State occasion of the year. If anything, the news was reporting that even more people would be attending and the bus was packed. Almost as soon as they got off, Clara took Dudley’s hand and they and the Jaspers walked towards the first gate where a queue had formed as tickets were checked, along with wands or anything else security deemed inappropriate.

They passed through the queue pretty quickly and Dudley paled a bit seeing that the security people were using wands to search the people. Clara squeezed his hand and said not to worry. Unless he had a weapon on him, nothing would happen and to Dudley’s relief nothing did. Their tickets were checked and they stepped through the gate into the outer court around the castle which was a huge, grassy field. Off to the left, Dudley saw soldiers in old fashioned red uniforms and horses with saddles that Clara explained were the honor guard that would precede the Duke and Queen’s carriages into the Castle proper. To the right, several very fancy cars were parked and there were several tents set up which Clara explained was where the Duke and his party got dressed and would wait to meet the Queen before the whole thing really got started. There was also a long line of fancy, open horse carriages, fourteen in all. Clara commented that the last time there were only something like two or three. She said those carriages would bring the Duke, Royal Family and official guests into the castle.

He saw two flags flying from above the castle gate proper. He recognized one as the Union Jack, the flag of Great Britain. The other, he was told, was the flag of the Duchy of Charenwell itself which was red with a white "X" pattern crossing from one side of the flag to another. They were on either side of another flagstaff that was empty for now. Clara explained that the Queen's flag would be raised when she arrived.

As they got closer to the gate, Dudley heard Clara gasp.

"Dudley! We got one!" she said excitedly.

"Got what?" Dudley asked.

"See that?" she said pointing to a red dot on her ticket.

Dudley nodded.

"That means I win!"

"Okay," Dudley drawled.

"It means I get to go to the reception and ball and can bring a guest."

Dudley stopped in his tracks and Clara looked at him. "Dudley?" she asked.

"Oh, sorry. I guess I should formally ask you to the ball or is it you who asks me?"

"Well," she said, "I do have the ticket. But it's usually the boy who asks."

"Guess it's a good thing I wore this suit, eh?"

"It sure is."

“And I think I forget to tell you that you do look very pretty.”

“Thank you.”

“So since I’m all dressed up and you’re so pretty, will you go with me?”

Clara hugged him. “Of course I’ll go with you Dudley. But why so nervous? You do seem nervous.”

“Um... well, my cousin will be there and I haven’t really seen his since last summer and we were not exactly on the best of terms.”

“It’s not like you have to sit with him. He’ll be eating with the Queen most like. But you’ll probably have to shake his hand or something.”

“I guess I can do that without making a fool of myself. Then there’s...”

“What?”

“I ... well ... I don’t really know how to dance,” he said with some embarrassment. “I don’t want you to look ... er ...”

“Dudley don’t worry. As long as you avoid stepping on my feet too much, I won’t mind. I can even show you how, if you want.”

“Okay.”

“Great! Now let’s see if there still good places up front to see the ceremony,” she said dragging Dudley at a trot through the castle gates into the courtyard beyond.

The situation in the tent had calmed down dramatically in a few minutes although it seemed to take longer for Cissy to calm down and let go of Harry. Over the last three weeks he had somehow learned to accept both the notion of physical contact and that it seemed women



(or at least his women) needed far more of it than he had thought. Still, Cissy was not what he had expected.

“Sorry,” she said softly when she finally broke the hug. “And thank you. I needed that.”

“No problem,” Harry said.

“I think that’s the first time anyone hugged me since I was a little girl,” she said with a sad smile. “If you’ll excuse me, I need to return to the dressing tent to freshen up a bit.”

“I’ll go with her, Harry,” Stacey said.

Harry raised an eyebrow.

“What happened to me wasn’t her fault. I don’t blame her. She looks like she could use a friend.”

“You did smack her one,” Harry pointed out.

“Sorry. I was ... well she was ... she was trying to ... I guess I overreacted a bit. What that man did is still a little too fresh.”

“It’s okay. Just bring her back in one piece please,” Harry said. “And don’t take too long, either. I do want you with us when they arrive.”

“It won’t be but a couple minutes,” Stacey said following Cissy from the tent. Harry noted Andy was with them which eased his mind. A part of him was concerned that Cissy might not come back.

“Your Highness?” a voice asked. Harry turned and saw Remus in his Lord Mayor robes. A tall, dark haired woman was with him.

“Moony?” Harry said. “It’s Lord Mayor today, right?”

Remus smiled.

“You got too many bloody titles,” Harry quipped.

“Not nearly as many as you, Harry,” Remus said. “Then again, I’m not the Duke. I’d like to introduce you to Miss Stephanie Riley. She’s my – er – date for the ball today.”

“That’s wonderful! Miss Riley it is a pleasure to meet you. I dare say Remus almost looks respectable with such an escort. I would say he does look so, but that would be asking me to stretch the truth about this Marauder too far.”

“Thank you, I guess,” the woman responded with a questioning look.

Remus growled. “Channeling old Paddy, are you?”

“He wouldn’t want to think you’re getting a free ride,” Harry quipped. “And I am supposed to be his Heir.”

“Right,” Remus said. “We need to get these folks lined up. I just received word Her Majesty’s motorcade is five minutes from the fortress.”

Harry nodded. A couple of Elves appeared and began arranging the guests for their pre-ceremony audience with the Queen and her party. They were soon arranged in rows on one side of the tent. Harry stood in the middle of the front row with Luna and his Black ladies to his right and Hermione and his Potter ladies to his left, including Stacey who had just returned. Behind them stood Neville, Susan, Amber and Neville’s parents along with Bill and Fleur and Bill’s two concubines. Fred and George were in the third row with their ladies. Behind them were the Tonks, Cissy, Stephanie and the four other families who had been invited to this pre-event event.

A band outside struck up Hail to the Queen. Remus stepped out of the tent. As Lord Mayor, he was to escort the Queen and her party into the tent once the honors were over. Had Harry been outside, he would have seen the cars coming up the drive at a sedate pace as the Royal standard was raised over the castle. As soon as the last note played a loud “Boom!” shook the air as the cannon’s on the

fortress walls began their slow, twenty-one gun salute just as they had two weeks ago. A part of Harry wondered what the “soldiers” thought about having to do this sort of thing twice in two weeks.

For him, as we waited, he knew what he thought. On the one hand, he had enjoyed the ball last time. He loved seeing Hermione and the others so dressed up and looking so beautiful and he certainly enjoyed dancing with them last time. He was also pleased Luna would see one of these events as he knew they were rare. On the other hand, he was not a fan of formal attire and Remus seemed to be having too much fun not telling him about these sorts of things in advance. While he knew about this event a week ago, it seemed that Remus had neglected the part about the Queen being here. Had he not heard Hermione panicking earlier in the day, he probably would not have known until just now. Fortunately for him, Remus had seen fit to give at least one of his ladies a heads up and from that hint; Hermione was able to get all worked up about it. He just hoped he wouldn't make a fool of himself. But Hermione had told him to try and relax. No one expects a fifteen year old to be the model of royal etiquette.

The last gun sounded and cheers could be heard outside the tent. Remus entered and stood in from of the others, but off to one side. A few people Harry did not recognize entered, setting some chairs up facing the assembly. Finally, a gentleman in a suit entered.

“Your Highness! My Lord! Ladies and Gentlemen! His Royal Highness, Charles Price of Wales!” And a tall man entered whom Harry did recognize from pictures. “Prince William and Prince Harry.” Two boys entered. The red haired one was clearly younger than Harry. Harry was told that the older one, William, was just about a year younger than he was. The three were all in dark suits. “His Royal Highness, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.” A tall, older gentleman entered. “Her Royal Majesty, Elizabeth the First, by the Grace of God Queen of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.” The queen entered. She was dressed in a very nice and probably expensive dress, but was obviously not as formal in her dress as they were. Harry had been told that the custom here was that the Duke and his Ladies always dressed formal when welcoming the Queen even if she was not so

formal. The Queen took her position in front of the tallest chair, but remained standing.

Remus left his position to the side and walked to a place directed in front of the Queen, bowing as he faced her. "Your Majesty," he began, "on behalf of the People of the Duchy of Charenwell, I welcome you to Potter Castle and Government House."

"Thank you, Lord Mayor Lupin," she replied formally. "We are pleased to be here again after all these years and pleased at the welcome we have thus far received."

"Thank you, your Majesty. Your Majesty, May I present His Highness, Lord Flying Officer Sir Harry James Potter, Duke of Charenwell, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black?"

Harry nervously stepped forward. "Your Majesty," he said as he bowed.

The Queen looked a little surprised. "Perhaps our information was inaccurate?"

"You're Majesty?" Harry asked in confusion.

"We were advised that you are married. You seem rather young."

"I – er – I guess I am both then, Your Majesty. I am married under magical law and shall be sixteen at the end of this month."

"An emancipated young wizard may marry of his own accord at fourteen, Your Majesty," Remus said. "A minor wizard may accept a Consort Bond from a Witch at the same age and such bond is binding."

"And young women?"

"There is no set age, provided they have the consent of their Magical Guardian – usually but not always their father, Your Majesty."

They may enter into a bond or marriage six months after they are physically old enough to bear a child. That age varies from woman to woman, of course. They require no consent to become a Consort.”

“Of course,” the Queen said. “And as we understand it, there are more than one legally recognized bonds between a witch and a wizard?”

“That is correct, Your Majesty. A Wife at Law is identical in all respects to a non-magical marriage. It is, however, more likely the result of a contract between families – an arrangement – done for the political or economic benefit of the families and not necessarily based upon the desire of the couple. It is the weakest bond as it can end in divorce or annulment. A Wife and Consort is a consensual and magical union between a witch and her husband predicated on mutual love and affection. It is reinforced by both magical contract and by the couple’s magic and is the strongest bond. The rite creating the Bond is usually done in private with just the couple present. A public wedding may follow sometime later.”

“Strongest bond?” the Queen asked.

“As I understand it, your Majesty, the magical bond is unbreakable. There are no known cases of marital infidelity or divorce in history between a Consort and her Husband.”

“And if they are or prove to be incompatible?”

“That has never been known to happen, your Majesty. The magic of the bond prevents such things. If there is any drawback to that Bond – and one might argue it’s no such thing – it is that the couple must love each other and already be compatible as a couple. Lust will not do, nor will a rational belief that they should bond. If the emotion is not present, the Bond will not take. While the Consort Bond is not uncommon, you will find witches and wizards who married at law because the Bond would not take hold and many of them have long marriages.”

“Interesting,” she replied. “And Lord Harry, do you have a Consort?”

“Uh – two actually, Your Majesty,” Harry replied blushing.

“We do not understand. You say the Consort Bond prevents infidelity, and yet Lord Harry has two Consorts? Is that not a contradiction?”

“It is quite uncommon,” Remus said, “but not a contradiction. Both the magic and the laws that support it recognize the need to preserve family lineages. Should a Wizard be the sole surviving male heir of more than one Ancient House, that being a magical line unbroken on the male side for at least a thousand years (and in Lord Harry’s case, both lines in question date back at least as far as King Arthur’s Court), such wizard may take a Consort for each line to preserve it. In Lord Harry’s case, he is the sole surviving male in the Potter line and, by virtue of the fact that he was designated as the sole Heir of the Black line as well, he is entitled to two Consorts, provided he could find two.”

“And he has?”

“Yes, Your Majesty,” Harry said. “May I introduce them?”

“Please.”

“You Majesty, my Wife and Consort, Lady Dame Hermione Jane Potter nee Granger, Duchess of Charenwell.”

Hermione walked forward and curtsied. “You Majesty,” she said.

“And how old are you Dear?” the Queen asked. “How long have you been married?”

“I’m sixteen, Your Majesty,” Hermione replied. “I’ll be seventeen in September. Today is our three week anniversary, to be exact.”

“And your parents? Are they aware of this?”

“They gave us their blessing to marry,” Hermione said. “They and we thought it would be later than it was. We bonded sort of by accident yet on purpose. As the Lord Mayor said: if we were neither right for each other or ready, the Bond could not have happened. I said the Oath, thinking it was a nice thing to say and not realizing at the time its full implications. But I do not regret it for it was my intention to marry Harry even before, as it was his intention to marry me. So we were bonded. But with the troubles, my parents had to leave the country. They are not yet aware of our Bond.”

“I see. And your other Consort, Lord Harry?”

“May I present my Wife and Consort Lady Luna Celeste Black nee Lovegood, Countess Designate of Darby?”

Luna walked forward and curtsied. “Your Majesty,” she said. “I’ll be sixteen in September. My mother died in an explosion when I was nine. My father was murdered two weeks ago tomorrow and I’ve been bonded to Harry for nine days. And, I am both very lucky and very happy to be Harry’s Consort.”

“We are sorry to hear of the loss of your parents, Lady Luna.”

“I was and am fortunate to have friends and now a new family who stand with me,” Luna replied. “Sometimes one must have a dark day to appreciate the sunlight.”

“Indeed,” the Queen said. “Our Ambassador advised me you also maintain concubines, Lord Potter. We are curious. With two lovely wives, why do you feel the need for additional relations? How is that not infidelity?”

Why do I feel like I’m back at school trying to explain why I broke a rule to Professor McGonagall? Harry thought to himself.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = Pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 21 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).
2. Mary Ellen Howard Weasley, age 18 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).



2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.1. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).

2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN: THERE'S MAGIC?

SUNDAY, JULY 14th, 1996 –Government House, Pottersport, Charenwell.

“This is the perfect spot, Dudley,” Clara said. They seemed to be at a corner of some barricades right up front. “I’m surprised no one’s staked it out already, but we are early.”

“Perfect?” Dudley asked.

“To see things. We’re right up front on the opposite side of the main path from where the carriages will pull up. Most people think the other side is better. But I think we can actually see more from here, don’t you?” She was really excited.

“I guess,” Dudley said. “You know more about this than I do. When’s this supposed to begin?”

Clara opened a pamphlet. “They gave me this when we came through the Gatehouse,” she said, “it’s a program of sorts. It says here the procession should begin at two. The Duke is going to have an audience with Her Majesty beforehand.”

“That’s forty-five minutes,” Dudley noted. “A long time to stand...”

“No worries there, Dudley. Act like you’re going to sit.”

“What?”

“Trust me.”

Dudley began to sit down even though there was neither a chair nor a bench beside him. He was not sure what was going to happen or if she was messing with him. Before he could make up his mind Clara was sitting on something. Dudley looked behind him and a small park bench was there. He sat down next to Clara, as the bench really was only large enough for the two of them, and looked at her in shock.

“Some kind of magical field,” she said with a shrug. “Don’t ask me what kind. Could be some kind of conjuration keyed to our thoughts or movements, but I don’t know.”

“It’s real?” Dudley asked.

“Real enough,” Clara replied. “Although it will probably disappear if we stand.”

“Guess we won’t stand then,” Dudley said.

“Well, not until the procession at any rate. We’ll have to stand for that.”

“Still, this is pretty cool. I never thought about magic being useful.”

“It’s just a different kind of thing. Technology is useful too. Just like technology, magic can be put to good uses, convenient ones like this, or bad ones. Good people are good people. Magic doesn’t change that.”

“Can magic make people like people they wouldn’t like otherwise?”

“Not really. There are magics that can make people act or behave in ways they would not. They are mostly illegal and always considered improper. But deep down, it can’t change who a person really is. They have things called Love Potions, but those don’t make the person love anyone. Lust? Sure. Suppress their inhibitions? They can do that. But the potion can’t create a true feeling or one which would last after the potion wears off. Why do you ask?”

“I ... No girl has ever liked me before, at least not that I know of. I just wondered ... I mean it’s been a day and ...”

“I will admit, based on what you’ve told me about your past, I probably wouldn’t have liked you at all a couple years ago. But I didn’t meet that Dudley, did I? I met you. I met a nice looking boy who wasn’t mean to me and didn’t think he could get boyfriend privileges

just because I talked to him. That happens, you know. I also met a boy who figured out he needed to change and was willing to, not for me but for himself. Mummy always said if you can't like the boy as he is, then don't bother. I like the Dudley I met yesterday and who gave me flowers today and is taking me to the Ball. I don't know why, but I do. I just hope he likes me too."

"I do," Dudley said. "That's also weird in a way given the fact I hated magic almost as much as my Dad does once. You're showing me that my fear was misplaced, I guess. I should not fear a good witch, should I?"

"Not unless you really piss her off," Clara giggled. "But that is not a witch thing, it's a woman thing."

"You've been showing me that. It's not about magic, is it? It's about people."

The Queen looked either confused or upset. She had just listened to a lengthy discussion of the Concubine Bond, its history, effect, uses and permutations, both in the general sense and in regards to the women before her. She heard of its abuses back in Britain and heard from each woman as to their relationship with Harry. She also learned about the laws and trade in Britain supporting that culture and of the laws in Charenwell placing severe restrictions upon it. She learned the Bond was practically permanent and to break it entirely would have dire consequences to the witch. Those who were "free" remained bound to a family, not a single wizard, but such "family Bonds" took years to form and could only become effective once the Wizard died and then only if he wished it to be so. Most either did not, or did not know they could which was why Minerva was still bound to her third generation of wizard. It shocked the Queen that the accomplished woman was unashamed of her status or of her relationship with the boy young enough to be her grandson. But it was the boy who stole the show.

It was clear that he found the whole thing repugnant. However, he saw it as his duty to help those that he could. He could not break the bond, but he could make the lives of those bound to him better,

meaningful and fulfilling for them. She then learned the other young men present were doing the same thing. From the women who had been bonded before they joined this group, she learned about what most wizards in Britain were like and how this life was heaven in comparison.

“This is not what we were told,” she said. “We were told that it is slavery, which you do not deny outright, and that it is as illegal in magical Britain as in the rest of our realm. We were told the Duke is an immature boy who does not know any better and is probably doing this because he is selfish, shallow, and disrespectful of others and that he believes he is above the law. The Duke is a spoiled child with no moral fiber or concept of right or wrong. To be quite frank, we arrived here expecting just that. What we learn here puts lie to all we were told before we left. We see we were misinformed at even the most basic of levels regarding this aspect of our magical subjects and their culture. Lord Harry is as different from what we were led to believe as day is from night. We are forced to wonder in what other ways our Magical Counselor has misled us and for what purpose.

“I am sure, Lord Harry, that our discussions must have seemed at best like a scolding from a grandparent, which might seem apt seeing as my grandsons are about your age. I now regret my approach to this situation. You are indeed a surprising young man and a credit to your family and your country and I apologize to any offense caused either to you or your remarkable ladies.”

After a half an hour or more of defending a position that in the broadest sense he considered indefensible, but in this situation thought was necessary, Harry finally relaxed a little. “Thank you, Your Majesty. For a while there, it felt as if I were caught out of bounds after curfew. Professor McGonagall could be quite – er – intimidating under such circumstances. Didn’t matter what I thought at the time, disappointing her always made me feel guilty. I never wanted to and never want to let her down.”

“Thank you Harry,” Minerva said.

“It’s true,” he smiled. “Magical Counselor, Your Majesty?”

“Indeed, Lord Harry,” the Queen said. “The Crown of England has had a Magical Counselor since before the Norman Invasion. It was and is a wizard whose function is to advise the Crown on issues of magic and the magical world. When your Duchy was granted independence from England in 1217, it was with the understanding that the Duke serve in such capacity in perpetuity and at the Crown’s pleasure. Our estate here on your south coast is no accident. It was built over two hundred years ago to facilitate communications between the Crown and its Counselor in conditions of secrecy. That was rather hard to do in London or Windsor surrounded by courtiers.”

“But if it’s the Duke, how could you have met with your Counselor before I was invested?”

“Towards the end of your last wizards’ war, and not long after Margaret Thatcher became our Prime Minister, because that war had spilled over noticeably into our world, and in consultations with the Prime Minister and your Ministry of Magic in Britain, we deemed it prudent to consider a Counselor closer to the problems as it were. This was not long after Duke Charlus passed and while we had faith and admiration for your Grandfather, our government did not hold with his conclusion that the problems back home could and should be resolved internally as opposed to by my government. While he was recommending some form of military intervention, he felt that non-magical involvement was dangerous. As this was deemed inflammatory at the time, we were persuaded to seek counsel closer to home.”

Harry nodded. “Might I ask whether you had a meeting with your Counselor since this past Wednesday?”

“I had.”

“And it was then that he spoke to you about my fitness to rule or stand as Duke? I gathered the premise of your questioning was along those lines ultimately.”

“It was and you are correct, Lord Harry. It was also I should note the first time we spoke of you in any context. He had mentioned an unnamed ‘Boy-Who-Lived’...”

“Merlin I hate that name,” Harry growled.

“My apologies.”

“It’s okay, Ma’am.”

“As I said, he had mentioned this other boy before, but without name or detail. I was surprised at our talks. I have faith in the judgment of our ambassador here and his assessment seemed to be of a totally different young man. I am pleased that it was his assessment that is accurate.”

“Would I be wrong in assuming your Counselor is Albus Dumbledore?”

“You would not. I am curious as to why you supposed it was him.”

“Many reasons, not in the least being he is de facto dictator back home. But the timing is consistent. Since arriving here I have learned that he has been plotting against me and my country, probably for years. He illegally held me in Britain following the death of my parents. He illegally appointed himself as my guardian and used such guardianship to access my family accounts, to what end I do not know. And, it would seem, he concocted a rather elaborate plan to have me married off and breeding, produce an heir, assassinate me and gain control of that heir for his own purposes. On Wednesday, I pretty much put a stop to all of that, publically called into question his competence and honesty, revealed him as an embezzler and legally had his accounts frozen pending repayment of the stolen funds. It would seem the old coot is the one throwing the tantrum.”

“You have evidence of this?”

“As to his misuse or outright theft, I do. It was deemed sufficient to freeze his accounts. As to the rest, yes. However to use it would expose assets we would prefer not to place at risk. It was deemed sufficient to use other evidence in our possession to take action against his followers who were the key to executing his plan.”

“Again, Lord Harry, it would seem our Ambassador is right and our former Magical Counselor is wrong. It is true you are very young and inexperienced. But you are surrounded by capable advisors and accept their counsel. And you are also decisive. Your predecessor is old, to our knowledge accepts no counsel other than his own, and would prefer not to make a decision, or at least let us know he has made one.

“Albus Dumbledore is discharged as Magical Counselor without recognition forthwith. The Duke of Charenwell is hereby reinstated as it ought to have been.”

“Are you sure, Your Majesty?” Harry asked. “You were quite right when you noted my youth and inexperience.”

“We are quite confident in you, Lord Harry. What you lack in experience you make up for, or so it seems, by learning. We are confident you will not answer our questions unless you know the answer or have a considered opinion on the matter. We have correctly noted you are well advised and consider such advice in making your decisions and we further note that your decisions and your agenda are for and in the best interest of your people. We believe further that your years in Britain have made our people yours as well if not under your governance, then in your heart. You took upon your rather unique family not because you wanted to or because it was in your best interests to do so, rather because it was in their best interests. We desire the counsel of such a wizard, Lord Harry. We welcome advice from those who give it for the good of others and not because it furthers their own aims. We recognize your responsibility to place the welfare of your nation before all things, but are still confident you shall perform your service to us and advise us as to our own magical matters with the interests of our government at the forefront.



“That being said, Lord Harry, you are aware are you not of the situation in our magical realm?”

“Acutely, You Majesty. Your magical realm is involved in a resumption of a civil war. The current situation is merely a continuation of the war that occurred from sometime before 1971 through the murder of my parents in 1981. The factions are the same as are the principals. Most unfortunately, the magical realm chose to take no action during the hiatus to eliminate the causes. As the animosities remained, it was only a matter of time before open hostilities resumed.”

“So this Voldemort person has returned from the dead?”

“That would assume he died, Your Majesty. There is no evidence that he did. But yes, he has returned. I have seen him.”

“You’ve fought him,” Hermione said.

“Oh?” the Queen asked.

Harry nodded. “Four times thus far,” he said. “Twice when he was attempting to return and twice since. The first two times I beat him somehow.”

“Beat him?”

“In 1981, his physical body was destroyed, yet his spirit somehow remained. When I was eleven, he took possession of a wizard who was a professor at my school. I faced him and killed the man he possessed, preventing his complete return at that time. A year later I destroyed his second attempt. A year ago, he managed his complete return and I fought him to a standstill. A few weeks ago, I and my friends fought his best and most dangerous followers to a standstill despite being outnumbered two to one. I also faced him again. I do not yet understand by what magic he has managed to evade death and return. But he has returned, his followers flocked to him and it’s as if the intervening years never happened.” Harry felt that to discuss

horcruxes was unnecessary, particularly as the evidence suggested they might no longer exist.

“Dumbledore mentioned this. He seemed confident that it was a minor inconvenience.”

“In which case he is either a fool or has an agenda of his own that is probably not in the best interest of Your Majesty or your people. The terrorist organization known as Death Eaters quite nearly won last time. Their goal is to take over the magical world and enslave the non-magical. Conquest of Magical Britain is only the beginning and they were on the brink of that victory in 1981. They returned in full force while the magical government took no action whatsoever to prevent them from returning or any action that would protect us in the event of their return or the rise of another similar movement.

“To be frank, Voldemort and his Death Eaters, while a real and dangerous threat to us all, are not the problem. They are merely a symptom and until the problem is dealt with, both of our worlds remain in peril.”

“What is the real problem?”

“To over simplify, the problem is bigotry. The terrorists are mostly Purebloods. Those who are not believe in the supremacy of bloodline...”

“Sounds like Hitler and his Nazis and that Aryan nonsense.”

“An appropriate analogy I believe,” Harry replied. “The problem is this belief system dates back centuries. Worse, the government is for all practical purposes run by the bigots. All seats on the Wizengamot are hereditary. The government is mostly Purebloods or those from ancient magical lines. Those from newer magical families have no voice whatsoever. Worse, the prejudice prevents them from even getting jobs in the government. While not all Purebloods believe they are a superior race, many do and those that do only oppose Voldemort’s methods, if they oppose him at all. The whole system,

the whole society as it is now constituted is rotten to its core and must be replaced.”

“And your recommendations?”

“Obviously, the first actions must be directed against the Death Eaters. That organization must be exterminated to the last man. They are all mass murderers of the worst sort. That would eliminate the immediate threat. But the entire social system that gave rise to them must be eliminated as well. The current government must be replaced by a more equitable system. The caste system must be destroyed. The educational system must also be replaced. In its current incarnation, it fosters the environment of caste and bigotry that is at the heart of the problem that finds that world in its current crisis.”

“What is your assessment of the ability of the magical government to deal with the situation?”

“They can’t. They will fail. It’s only a question of when and not if.”

“During your last War, my government was considering military intervention. Are you saying it is really the only option?”

“I would say that direct, military intervention by your current armed forces should be considered an option of last resort. However, military intervention will be necessary.”

“You’re saying we should not do it, but we have to?”

“What I am saying, Your Majesty, is this: We cannot sit back and hope that the magicals in Britain will sort this out on their own in a manner that is in our long term best interest. We consider it almost certain that Voldemort and his vile following will prevail in magical Britain in time. But, direct intervention by a non-magical force would probably be counter-productive. In addition to revealing magic to a much larger number of people – quite possibly to the world at large – which might well reawaken the animosities that led to our secrecy in the first place, there is also the fact that most magicals would resist,

regardless of their leanings. However, an intervention by a magical force loyal to Your Majesty could both succeed and preserve the secrecy of our world.

“Although I have only been Duke for two weeks officially and lived until three weeks ago ignorant of both this nation and my family’s role, I have already directed my government to begin preparations for war. Magical Britain lacks both the will and the means to deal with the crisis. Charenwell lacks merely the means. Last week, I took actions directed at weakening the enemy financially. As Lord Black, I learned that Voldemort’s financiers owed me a huge amount of money and the debts have been called. For all practical purposes, they are broke. Even more important, their safe havens and storage sites were all or mostly on Black lands. I have retaken control and confiscated what was there. It will set them back, but they will recover given time. They will recover because I doubt the magical government will take action. But this gives us time as well.

“We are in the initial planning stages. Some things can be done fairly soon. We hope to begin an evacuation of First Generation witches and wizards and their families from Britain within the next few months. They are under the most immediate risk of harm in the current crisis. They will be relocated here, although we are still working on the means. Travel to this country by magical means is exceedingly difficult and limited. Even my own countrymen typically travel to Britain by ship or airplane. We intend to airlift the evacuees from Britain over a period of months because that is easiest and quickest way to move them. There is the added advantage that using non-magical transport will not be detected. We are concerned that despite the fact they are at risk, should the magical government discover the Muggle Borns are leaving, they will try to stop it. Fortunately, they do not monitor airports.

“Removing the Muggle Borns will also effectively destroy the concubine trade. The vast majority of witches so bound are Muggle Borns. We are taking additional measures to significantly reduce if not eliminate that particular problem.

“Those are near term plans. Long term, I plan to raise a magical military which will be used to deal with the issues in magical Britain. I believe only that sort of intervention will work, but by keeping it magical, it will not create enmity between the worlds. And, as Charenwell is part of non-magical Britain, use of our troops is in a sense use of your own, Your Majesty. We are a long way from that point as it now stands and I would like to be able to consult with your government on these and related defense issues.”

“It would appear you have given this matter far more thought than your predecessor, Lord Harry. You are also far more concerned about the troubles and the potential impact upon the rest of Britain than he seemed to be. I can assume you planned to consult with my government at some point?”

“We were planning on contacting your ambassador fairly soon once we had a better idea of what we could do now and what we need to be able to do what we might need to do later.”

“We shall let our Prime Minister the Right Honorable Mr. Major know. We assume you would prefer to consult here?”

“It would be preferable, Your Majesty.”

“Very well. We are sure that can be arranged. A word of caution, Lord Harry: the Prime Minister does have contacts with your world. It now seems regrettable that his contacts are through the British Minister for Magic’s office.”

“I was not aware of that, Your Majesty, but it makes some sense. However, at this time the Ministry is in a bit of turmoil. There is likely to be a vote of no confidence against Minister Fudge any day now and it might take them some time to replace him. This might be the most opportune time to meet with the Prime Minister.”

“We shall see that it is arranged, Lord Harry. Whom should we contact here?”

“The Lord Mayor’s office will handle scheduling and other details, Your Majesty.”

SUNDAY, JULY 14th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell.

“What are you watching?” Vernon Dursley said looking up from that day’s copy of the London Times, which was about the only thing about his situation he was not complaining about. At least they had his newspaper here.

“It’s the Queen’s State Visit, Vernon,” Petunia said. “It’s happening now up at the Castle. Her motorcade arrived several minutes ago. They fired off cannons, the troops saluted; they played God Save the Queen and all of that. According to the telly, she’s in a tent out in front of the castle right now meeting with the Duke of this place.”

“Bloody useless,” Vernon grumbled.

“We are now switching live to our team in the Castle who will cover the events,” the television announcer said. The scene shifted to a man and a woman who seemed to be seated at a desk in the open. Behind them, Petunia could see a crowd gathering on a large lawn. Beyond that was a high, stone wall and a classic castle gatehouse where a steady stream of people were coming and moving off to the lawn.

“Good afternoon Charenwell,” the man said, “I’m of course Nigel Martin.”

“And I’m Emma Harris,” the woman said, “and we’re live from the courtyard of Government House awaiting the procession of guest and dignitaries for the first State visit from Queen Elizabeth in almost ten years. Needless to say, the crowd seems excited at the prospect of seeing the Queen.”

“And what a day as well,” Nigel said. “State occasions prevented Her Majesty from attending the Investiture of Duke Harry two weeks ago and she was represented by her ambassador. But she’s here today to formally recognize our Duke and Duchess and to preside

over the elevation of the Duke's Consort Lady Black to Countess of Darby. She will also be awarding knighthoods to the Countess, our Duke's newest Lady, Ginevra Weasley and our Duke's close friend Lord Neville Longbottom who, along with the Duchess, our Lord Mayor and Lady Dame Dora Black, fought in pitched battle against terrorist who threatened the security of Britain."

"What's this rubbish about Duchesses, Countesses and Ladies and such," Vernon growled.

"Hush Vernon," Petunia said.

"Let's cut to our own Sally Rogers who's with her crew in the crowd," the woman said.

The scene cut to a younger woman who was standing with her microphone. Behind her was the growing crowd of people. "Thank you Emma," she said. "Well, as you can see we are getting quite a turn out here today. Security believes that we may well see more people for today's event than for the Duke's Investiture two weeks ago. They are estimating there will be well over twelve thousand here today, which should push the catering staff for the picnic buffet to its limits. No word yet on how many will be lucky enough to attend the State Banquette and Ball, but we can be certain that each ticket holder is hoping they will be one of the lucky ones in the Lottery. Let's see."

The camera followed the woman as she walked over to a line of velvet ropes, behind which the crowd was gathering. The camera focused on two young people who were seated on a bench. Petunia recognized the boy immediately.

"VERNON! DUDLEY'S ON THE TELLY!"

"What's this nonsense?" Vernon said, and then he saw his son's face seated next to a very pretty girl with light brown hair. "That must be his date. Why would he be at that sort of thing?"

"Hush Vernon!"

“So,” the woman asked Dudley, “are you enjoying the festivities?”

“Not much happening right now,” Dudley said, “But I am enjoying the company,” he added indicating the girl he had his arm around.

“And who are you, young Lady?”

“Clara. Clara Jasper and my family and I are up from Pottersport. This is my friend Dudley who’s just moved here from a place outside London in England.”

“Really? So this is your first time in Charenwell?”

Dudley nodded. “My Dad’s company sent him here to run a new plant they’re building.”

“Our Duke did mention something along those lines two weeks ago,” the news lady said. “What do you know about it?”

“Not much really. My Dad worked at a plant that made drills. We moved here for the new plant which is making munitions or some sort, I think. His company makes that as well, I heard. They’re building a whole city eventually, but I suppose you’d already know that.”

“Am I wrong in supposing you are not like most of us?”

“I’m just a person,” Dudley said with a shrug. “In the end, that’s all any of us truly are, right?”

“Well said. Welcome to Charenwell.”

“Thanks.”

“So are you two lucky enough to be attending the Ball later? You sure look dressed for it.”



“We didn’t come here with an invite,” Clara replied. “But I did get picked in the lottery and Dudley here was kind enough to offer to be my escort.”

“What’s this?” Vernon said to the screen.

“Looking forward to meeting the Queen?”

“I am,” Clara said. Dudley just shrugged.

“I’m more interested in meeting the Duke, myself,” Dudley said. “I mean, he does live here and all and from what Clara says I might well run into him from time to time. That and there’s the fact we are about the same age.”

“The lad’s getting to meet this Duke?” Vernon said.

“So it would appear,” Petunia replied and the news woman ended her talk and looked for someone else to interview.

“Taking their bloody time,” Vernon said going back to his paper. Several minutes later the original pair was back on the screen.

“We have just received word that the audience has concluded,” the man called Nigel began, “and the special guests are exiting the tent for the carriages which means the procession is about to start. Emma?”

“According to the program,” Emma said, “Lord Mayor Lupin and his guest will be in the first carriage leading the guests and dignitaries along with Sir Stephen Blaire, Her Majesty’s Ambassador and his wife. They will be followed by the families of some of our young women who were illegally sold into slavery within the past few years...”

“What’s this rubbish?” Vernon asked looking up.

“A most despicable thing,” Nigel went on. “Sources from within Government House have reported that some forty-two girls were sold into slavery in Britain over the last few years by their high government officials who took advantage of our government’s inability to act without a sitting Duke. Our Duke has demanded reparations for the families of the victims seeing as our British friends are unwilling to release their slaves and return them home.”

“WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE IS THAT?” Vernon bellowed. “THERE ARE NO SLAVES IN BRITAIN!”

“Vernon, I’m sure they’re just mistaken,” Petunia said.

“” Then it’s bloody inflammatory propaganda! Even the bloody Russians were not this bad!”

“There is some suggestion that should the British Government fail to comply with our legitimate demands, the Duke will seek authorization for a full on trade embargo. Seeing as over eighty percent of their food supply is from our fields and fishing fleet. That could have serious implications going forward.”

“They’re daft! We are not dependent upon one country for that much!” Vernon said. “And if they’re rattling their sabers, what’s the bloody Queen doing here at all?”

“Vernon!”

Vernon shut his mouth as the first carriages began entering the courtyard. They were spaced such that the next carriage in line did not emerge from the gatehouse until the one in front had dropped off its passengers and moved on. They watched as the Lord Mayor and his date and the British Ambassador waived to the crowd. Vernon grumbled that the Ambassador seemed to be in far too good of a mood if there was really talk of slaves and an embargo. The next three carriages held the families of the repatriated victims, who were now married to some of the other guests. The family of “The Former Miss Shelly Parker” was first and the announcer said Miss Parker had just recently married a Mr. George Weasley, said to be a very

capable British businessman. The Smith family was next. Their daughter Verity apparently was married to another business man named Fred Weasley. They were followed by the Carter family, whose daughter Danielle was also married to Fred Weasley.

“ALSO?” Vernon howled. “WHAT DO THEY MEAN ALSO? THAT’S ILLEGAL NONSENSE THAT IS!”

The last of the families to arrive were the Johnsons, whose daughter Samantha was recently married to a William Weasley who was a banker.

“Sickos! The whole ruddy lot of them!” Vernon growled.

A carriage entered with a young man with red hair and three women. “Next,” Emma said, Mr. William Weasley and his family: his wife and Consort the former Ms. Fleur Delacour and his wives the former Ms. Mary Howard and Ms. Samantha Johnson.”

“Did she just say wives?” Vernon growled.

“I think she did,” Petunia said in shock.

“And here comes one of his brothers,” Emma continued as a new carriage with another red haired young man and three women entered the courtyard. “This would be Mr. Fred Weasley, his wife and Consort the former Ms. Alicia Spinnet and his wives the former Ms. Verity Smith and Ms Danielle Carter.”

“What kind of sick place is this?” Vernon yelled.

“I – I don’t know,” Petunia said.

The procession continued. “Mr. George Weasley and his wife and Consort the former Ms. Angelina Johnson and his wives the former Ms. Shelly Parker and Ms. Ellen North.” This time there was no howling from Vernon as he simply watched in shock. “Next, we have Lord Neville Longbottom with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank and

Alice Longbottom and his wife and Consort, Lady Longbottom the former Ms. Susan Bones and his wife the former Ms. Amber Harker.”

“Vernon! They’re kids some of them! They can’t be much older than Dudley!”

Vernon just growled.

“And the last Carriage before Her Majesty and our Duke. It seems it’s the Duchess Hermione and some of the Duke’s wives ...”

“Some?” Vernon and Petunia said together.

“...Lady Minerva, our head of educational development and we remember Lady Astoria from the Duke’s Investiture two weeks ago. According to the program, the other two are recent additions to our Duke’s household: the former Ms. Stacey Campbell and apparently the younger sister of the Weasley brothers. Her name is Ginevra, but it says here she goes by the name Ginny.”

“One must admire the Duke’s taste,” Nigel said.

“Still, this is one sick place,” Vernon said. “Duke’s probably an old pervert given how old one of them is and how young the others are. Bet the older one’s this Duchess.”

A band of bagpipes and drums soon followed.

“I hate that racket,” Vernon growled.

They were followed by soldiers in very old looking red uniforms.

“Which means the Royal Party is arriving,” Emma said. “First in are His Highness Charles the Prince of Wales and his sons William and Harry...”

“Fine example for the boys!” Vernon said, “a country full of God forsaken heathens and polygamists!”

The next carriage carried the Queen and Prince Philip. Vernon complained that the ruddy Royals should have declined the invite and barring that should not look so happy to be here.

“And finally our Duke, Harry the First!” Nigel said.

“Bloody common name for a bloody aristocratic little turd,” Vernon said.

“and his wife and Consort Lady Luna Black who shall be recognized formally as the Countess of Darby today along with the rest of the Duke’s wives Ladies Mallory, Dora and Daphne.” For the time being, it was a wide camera shot, such that Vernon and Petunia could not see the faces of the people clearly. Finally, as the Duke and this Lady Luna began to walk up the steps behind the other women to bow to the Queen, there was a close up of their faces.

“It can’t be!” both Vernon and Petunia said in shock.

“BLOODY FREAKS!” Vernon added.

SUNDAY, JULY 14th, 1996 – Government House, Pottersport, Charenwell.

Dudley and Clara had arguably a front row seat for the ceremony. True, they were standing as there were now over ten thousand in the Courtyard. But their view was unobstructed. They watched as each carriage arrived and the occupants were announced to the crowd. Dudley noted that Clara was rather stunned to learn that women from her country had been bound as concubines.

“It’s illegal here,” she said. “Oh, having one is not – not entirely. We did tell you that. But not even the Duke could sell a person off. We were told that the British wizards could not sell us either. Apparently, we were wrong about that. Why would they do that?”

Dudley had no answer. He watched in confusion as the Weasleys entered with their wives.

“Brits no doubt,” Clara said.

“Why do you say that?” Dudley asked.

“Aside from our Duke, no one here has more than one wife. Fair bet the other wives were concubines once,” Clara said. “Since we neither have need for them nor can we purchase them – well maybe we could, I don’t know. But without the Duke’s permission we could not bring them here. But they are here. Besides, never heard the last name Weasley, so my guess is they are friends of the Duke from Britain.”

“They are,” Dudley said. “Didn’t recognize the first one, but the other two came ‘round the house a couple of years ago.”

“That explains it then.” Clara said. “Still, as I understand it, it’s not like a British wizard to openly admit to having a concubine. Not like this at any rate.”

“As I remember, those two are probably unusual for wizards,” Dudley said.

“Oh?”

“They came over with another kid and their father to pick Harry up. They were taking him to some kind of World Cup for wizards...”

“Quidditch,” Clara said. “It’s kind of like football, but it’s played flying around on brooms.”

“Really?”

“It’s really complicated and confusing, or at least I think so,” Clara said. “Daddy and Granddad are fans, though. Anyway, you were saying?”

“Oh yeah. Well, this was before the Dementors, you know. Back then I was bloody terrified of all magic. Had an incident where a huge

wizard put a spell on me 'cause he was angry at my parents about Harry. Anyway, at that time I was on a rather severe diet. Used to eat far too much and it caught up with me. Anyway, so I was hungry and one of those two dropped what looked like a piece of candy and I was fool enough to eat it. Caused my tongue to grow as long as my arm, which might have been funny if I wasn't so freaked out about it. Didn't help my parents carrying on as they did. So I got this four foot long tongue and the older wizard keeps saying he'll sort it out, but my parents wouldn't let him and then all of a sudden, I'm back to normal. I guess it was kind of a joke looking back. But it just made me fear magic all the more."

The carriage carrying the House Potter ladies passed by.

"Who are they?" Dudley asked.

"Some of the Duke's ladies. The one in the deep blue dress is the Duchess and the others are also wives of House Potter," Clara said looking at her program. "Two of them are new."

"Five wives?" Dudley gasped. "And you said it's only some of them?"

"As Lord Black, he has four more."

"Bloody hell! Who's the older one? She's got to be what? In her thirties?"

"She's older than that," Clara said. "She's been bonded to the last two Dukes. She taught primary school here before my parents were born."

"Can't be that old," Dudley said.

"She's a witch," Clara said. "We live a lot longer and age slower."

"How much longer?"

“It’s rare for any of us to die before a hundred from natural causes. We can expect to live to a hundred and thirty and beyond if we take care of ourselves. For a long time people thought it was due to our magic, and it is to some extent. But the non-magicals here live a lot longer than they would elsewhere and if they are bonded to a witch or wizard, longer still.”

“So she’s a lot older then?”

“Sixty-eight according to this, which isn’t old by our standards at all.”

“Still, Harry’s married to her?”

“Bonded to her, which is almost the same thing,” Clara said.

“Yikes. He can have that magic bit.”

They watched the rest of the procession and finally saw Harry in the final carriage with four other women.”

“I’ll give him some credit,” Dudley said. “Even the older ones are lookers. And he even looks like a Duke, I guess.”

They watched and applauded as Harry and the cute blonde in a green dress followed the other ladies up the steps. The Queen was awaiting them and Harry bowed to her while the other ladies curtsied. They then stood off to the side as the Queen approached a podium. She gave short speech stating she was pleased to once again be among the people of this magical land and thanked the Duke for his gracious hospitality and an enlightening discussion of the troubles within her own magical realm back in Britain. She then called forward Harry and the blonde whose name was Luna apparently. Luna knelt before the Queen, an oath was made and she arose as the Countess of Darby. Luna was then joined by two others. One was a boy about Harry’s age called Lord Longbottom and the other was a red haired girl. They knelt with Luna and were knighted.

“The Knights of the Round Table are real?” Dudley asked when he heard of the Order.



“It’s an Order for the Magical Protectors of the Realm,” Clara said. “Been around well over a thousand years.”

“Whoa! And Harry?”

“He’s one as well. He was knighted when he was recognized as the Duke.”

“Was that for fighting that Volde – what’s-it?” Dudley asked.

“He and his followers are threats to us all, Dudley,” Clara said. “While we are safe from him here, all of Britain is at risk. Naturally the Queen would knight those who fight in defense of her country. Although Daddy has said that such honors are political as well. Probably to build a relationship between the Crown and our country in this case, or between the Crown and us magicals or something like that.”

Before Dudley could think of a comment, the air filled with a droning sound. Dudley and thousands of others looked up. Four biplanes in a staggered “V” formation flew over the castle, the blue on red bull’s-eye clearly visible on the underside of their lower wings.

“Those would be our Tiger Moths,” Harry said to the Queen and her entourage. “We currently have twelve in flying condition, although I’m told we have thirty-six others in storage that can be reassembled.”

“Are you a pilot, Lord Harry?” the Queen asked.

“I was the youngest Seeker in a century, Ma’am” Harry replied. “But that’s in broomsticks, not bi-planes. I soloed in one of those yesterday. Still have a lot to learn about flying planes, though.”

As soon as the biplanes disappeared, another flight of four planes flew over in a similar formation. These were single winged airplanes with a distinctive outline known to many who studied the warplanes of the Second World War.

“Spitfires, Lord Harry?” Her Majesty asked.

“Yes Ma’am. We got twelve of those in flying condition and another twenty-four in storage. My Grandfather flew them during the War. So far all I’ve done is sit in the cockpit of one for a bit.”

Four more flights of four planes passed over head. First came the Hawker Typhoons. Then the Douglas Dakotas followed by the Bostons. Finally, the large, four engine Lancasters passed over head. As each flew over, Harry told the Queen how many he had and how many more were in storage.

“What are you trying to tell us, Lord Harry? Are you planning an Air Force as well?”

“Basically,” Harry said nodding. “But while we have the planes, we need pilots which is something I’m working on. Moreover, the planes are of little utility right now. Something I’d like to talk with your people about is whether we can install upgrades for more modern and more accurate weapons. I recalled the news footage of the war a few years ago and speaking with my people I know those planes can’t carry those weapons as they are right now. They would be a real boost to any military operation, but even though I’m told most of our targets will be somewhat isolated – wizards like Voldemort and his followers don’t like living near Muggles – I would still prefer accuracy.”

“Assuming that can be done, how do you plan to get the pilots?”

“My Air Force will be mostly women,” Harry said. “Most of the young ladies who accompanied me today begin training this week. It gets them in the fight but keeps them reasonably safe as well. My grandfather ran some test during the last War and it seems it’s pretty difficult to take down a flying airplane with magic.”

“And you, Lord Harry?”

“Well, I intend to become a fully qualified pilot,” Harry said. “I’ve always liked flying. But should we go to war, I’ll probably be on the ground with the Army. There are reasons for that, not in the least

being there are those who have reason to believe I will be very formidable magically speaking and the fact my enemies are trying to seek me out even as we speak. Then there's also the unfortunate fact that I've already been in the fight. There's a part of me that can't sit back while others fight my battles."

Harry gave a short speech welcoming the Queen and her family and thanking them for finding the time to attend. He also welcomed home "our lost daughters" and pledged to try and return the others as well, but steered clear of promising success. The speech ended and the official party retired into Government House, with the lucky lottery winners queuing up to join them.

Dudley and Clara soon found them seated at a table with others from around the country and enjoying a very elegant meal. Dudley was told that Harry was probably enjoying a "private" setting with the Royal Family. Apparently, Dudley was told, it was customary for the Duke to dine with select guests at these things, and then join the entire gathering for the dancing and socializing following the meal.

As they were eating their dessert, the Royal Family made their appearance, slowly making their way to the entrance, speaking with many of the guests. The Prince of Wales himself stopped by their table for a few words. Clara said the Royals were not attending the Ball itself and were going to head back to the Royal Estate.

The dancing commenced soon after the Royal Family departed with Harry leading off with Luna as his first partner. Dudley admitted he was impressed and confessed to Clara that he doubted he'd do as well. She told him not to worry. Soon, he was in the crowd on the dance floor with Clara and she made it seem easy. Dudley wondered whether there was magic involved, but then realized if there was it was a good kind and stopped worrying about choosing to enjoy the company of the pretty girl before him.

Harry had danced with all his girls save one. He found Ginny talking with Bill and Fleur and she joined him for his last dance before he took a break.

"I noticed you didn't wait for me," he said as they started.

“I’m sorry,” she said, “was I supposed to?”

“I guess not,” Harry said. “Besides it was your brothers.”

“And Neville,” Ginny said.

“Oh?”

“He’s really improved since the Yule Ball,” Ginny said. “Then again, he’s a lot more confident in himself after this past year.”

“He’s that,” Harry agreed.

“Thank you, Harry,” Ginny said.

“I wasn’t going to be mad about your dancing...”

“No. Thank you for that as well. No, I meant thanks for believing me and not hating me.”

“The girls pointed out that it seemed out of character for you,” Harry said. “That, and of course the bond prevented you from lying. Still, a part of me hoped you were not truly involved. Unlike Ron, you never turned your back on me as a friend, so it would have crushed me if you were a part of it. If anything I should thank you for not being a part of it. But enough about that. Let’s just focus on now and the future, okay?”

“Sounds like a plan to me. Although, to be honest, when I was crushing on you first year...”

“You wouldn’t have been able to do it. The mere thought of writing to me would have put you off.”

“I did send that Valentine,” she said blushing. “It was horrid! I was so embarrassed that it was read in front of everyone.”

“Looking back, it was quite funny,” Harry said. “I might still have it somewhere.”

“Really?”

“I kept a lot of stuff,” Harry admitted. “Looking at stuff like that over probably kept me sane at Privet Drive...” Harry’s voice faded as he saw a face he did not expect to see. It couldn’t be, he thought, not here.

“Harry?”

“Um ... I just thought I saw something I wasn’t expecting.”

Ginny paled. “What?”

“My Cousin Dudley. I must be seeing things. I was talking about that place and ... still.”

When the song ended, he saw the face again. “Come with me,” he said to Ginny as he led her in search of what he was sure was his imagination. But as he drew closer, it seemed very real. “It can’t be,” he said.

“What? What can’t be, Harry?”

“If I’m right, Ginny, promise me you won’t hex him?”

“How can I? We had to leave our wands in the changing tent.”

“Just don’t get angry with him.”

“Who?” she asked. Harry was now standing before a large, blonde haired boy who was talking to a shorter girl with light brown hair. The boy had his back turned towards Harry and did not see him. The girl was paying attention to whatever the boy was saying, then glanced over and a surprised look crossed her face.

“Milord,” she said.

The boy turned. His face soon registered some kind of surprised expression.

“Harry?” he said.

“I’m surprised to see you here,” Harry said.

“Yeah,” the boy replied with some embarrassment, “well, Clara invited me to this and then she got a winning ticket so...”

“Clara?”

“Sorry,” the boy said. “Harry, this is my friend Clara Jasper. I met her yesterday on my morning run and she’s been showing me around and telling me loads of stuff. Clara, this is my Cousin Harry.”

“Cousin?” Ginny said as her eyes narrowed.

“Milord,” the girl said curtsying.

“Please, it’s just Harry. “It’s only been three weeks since I learned about any of this and the titles bother me usually.”

“I’m pleased to meet you, Harry,” Clara said.

“And this is my Wife-in-all-but-law, Ginny Potter-Black,” Harry said. “Ginny? This bloke is my Cousin Dudley. And I have no idea what he’s doing here.”

Ginny growled “Pleasure.”

“I take it you’ve told her about me then,” Dudley said with some disappointment.

“She’s known me for four years, Dudley,” Harry said.

“Can’t blame her for hating me then. I’d hate me too.”

“Dudley!” Clara said.

“The Dudley Harry knew was not a very nice person, Clara. That Dudley was the one attacked by Dementors last summer. Harry hasn’t seen me since then.”

“What are you on about?” Ginny asked.

“I want to apologize Harry,” Dudley said. “You went through thirteen years of hell with my family and I certainly was part of it.”

“Hey Harry,” a voice said and he saw Luna and Hermione walking up.

“This is my Wife and Consort Hermione, Duchess of Charenwell,” he said introducing Hermione, “and my other Wife and Consort Luna, Countess of Darby. Ladies, this is Clara Jasper and her – erm date I guess – my Cousin Dudley.”

“You’ve got to be kidding,” Hermione growled. “What’s he doing here?”

“He had just apologized...”

“If he thinks that will make up for...”

“Hermione, please calm down,” Harry said. “I want to hear him out, okay?”

“I guess.” Hermione clearly would have had other plans.

“Go ahead, Dudley,” Harry said.

“I also wanted to thank you for saving me from those dementor things last year. They told me at that magic hospital that the things would probably have killed me.”

“Magic hospital?”

Dudley nodded. “Dad wanted to take me to a regular one, but Mum told him – again – that the only cure for magic is magic. They wound up taking me there when we were eleven and that huge bloke gave me a pig’s tail.”

Harry chuckled. “He was hoping for the full thing.”

“Don’t blame him. I was one.”

Hermione snorted. “Harry has described you as being as big as a baby killer whale.”

“I’ve lost weight!” Dudley protested. “But a couple years ago, that would have been close to the mark. Almost got expelled for being rounder than tall.”

“You have lost weight,” Harry nodded. “A lot, to be honest.”

“Damn Dementors did it in a way,” Dudley said. “I saw what my life had become and I didn’t like it at all. Been trying to change. Dumped all my old friends – good thing to as I heard Piers got arrested for drugs. I realized that all my bad memories began because of you in a way.”

“Oh?” Harry asked suspiciously.

“Not like you might think. When I was real young, Dad used to punish me for not being mean to you and I couldn’t understand why and didn’t want to. I wanted you as a friend. I think I was about three or so. The more he punished, the more stubborn I got ‘cause I knew something was off. Then he switched to bribery and ... well kids can be selfish and some of us more than others. Taking those ‘bribes’ led to where I was in life: fat, lazy, a bully with no real friends and probably the only one in that house truly deserving of St. Brutus’s. Sorry Harry.”



“Er – no problem I guess.”

“St. Brutus’s?” Hermione asked.

“Dad told everyone that’s where Harry was going to school. He said it was a school for criminal boys.”

“He didn’t!”

Harry and Dudley shrugged.

“I was hoping to say this to you when you got back from your school. But Dad locked you away before I got home and you were gone the next morning,” Dudley shrugged. “Felt real bad about not being able to talk to you. Well, I did have a minor relapse on Friday when we had to carry all our own luggage.”

“Relapse?” Hermione asked.

“I complained that Harry would pick this summer to scamper,” Dudley shrugged. “Then again, I didn’t know much about what was happening back home with you magicals, did I? So – um – but how long have you known about all this?”

Harry chuckled. “Uncle Vernon’s going to have kittens, isn’t he?”

“About what?” Dudley asked. “That you’re a Duke? That you’re married, more than once it seems? Or that he now lives in a country full of people like you?”

“You know?”

“Clara’s been telling me,” Dudley said. “She’s a witch, you know.”

“And you’re not running for it?”

“He did go pale when I banished a spider yesterday,” Clara said. “But he seems okay with it.”

“She’s really nice,” Dudley said. “The magic stuff doesn’t bother me, it seems. That was mostly Dad, I guess and the fact I had no idea about it at all. I’m hoping to be different than him. I figure if I think of what he’d do or say and do the opposite, I might have a decent life instead of hating everything the way he does.”

“Which do you think will set him off more?”

“Can’t even guess. All of it. Mum was saying she was gonna watch the Queen on the Telly, so they probably know some already. They might know all. Guess it depends on what the telly folks said,” Dudley shrugged.

“And when he finds out you’re – um – consorting with the enemy?”

“He better get used to the idea,” Dudley said. “I actually like it here. Besides, his Company made it clear that quitting and failure are not options. They sent him here, you know.”

“Actually, I didn’t,” Harry said.

“Dad said the Duke controls his company and wanted a plant here,” Dudley began.

“I don’t make those kinds of decisions, Dud. I say I want to offset our trade deficit in manufactured goods and create jobs. Someone else decides the details. In this case, that someone else was a bit of a joker when he was our age. Oh, and I did say I wanted you lot out of harm’s way. Sooner or later the bad guys would have come looking, and they are not interested in a cuppa. I guess my people decided to kill two birds with one stone.”

After a pause Dudley asked: “Married eh? How long?”

“Three weeks as of today with Hermione here,” Harry said beaming. “The others were later.”

“Bloody hell! How did that happen?”

“Bit of a long story, Dud.”

A/N:

Why WWII planes? Why not something newer?

Having been involved in such programs not long before this time, the answer is governments don't give away airplanes. The best you can hope for is to buy them for a little over cost, if they're selling and the Brits were not. Giving another country an Air Force is never done lightly as it gives that country the ability to cause problems. Training and arming their army is far less threatening geopolitically (up to a point. Tanks and heavy artillery are another matter and by this time the Brits were largely out of the major arms deals.) Even used “modern” aircraft are expensive. The Israeli defense industry grew because its usual suppliers were keenly aware that any shipment of offensive arms scared the Arabs silly. What they used in the '67 War was of Korean War vintage for the most part (they had a few decent French fighters). If the Israeli's wanted top notch stuff, it was easier to make it themselves or upgrade old stuff themselves than hope for a political climate that would allow them in the market. Besides, every time they got good stuff, the Americans and Russians also upgraded their neighbors. The times they got good stuff without pushing was when the Russians dumped front line tanks and planes into their neighbors.

Another example was Spain under Franco which lacked the financial resources to buy into the market. The Spanish Air Force still had Heinkle 111 bombers as front line aircraft in the 1970's. (Those were the German bombers used in 1939 against Poland and 1940 against Britain [and later] and Franco got his during the Spanish Civil War in 1937 or '38.) It would break both Harry and Charenwell to get front line aircraft and it's unnecessary. (Front line aircraft are not leased and the buyers with money drive that market and they don't want old planes.) The planes he has are more than adequate if their targeting and weapons systems are upgraded and a laser guided bomb is not terribly expensive (moreover, the Weasley Twins might come up with

a magical alternative for less cost). Were we to talk about modern combat aircraft, the two years Harry wants to use to prepare would be largely wasted in negotiations with the Brits about the planes. Moreover, had that been an empty airfield, Harry would never have asked for planes in the first place as they are not known in magical combat...

Here, the planes are already in inventory. (The Bombardier Q300 notwithstanding, but that's a civilian passenger plane... An Airline is not as threatening as a Bomb Wing.)

#### RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).

2. Her Grace, Lady Dame Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, Countess of Darby, KRT, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).

3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P

5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P

6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

8. Lady Dame Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, KRT, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).

2. Mary Ellen Howard Weasley, age 18 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).

3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).

Lord Sir Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, KRT, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May Spinet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).

2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT: THE AUCTION

MONDAY, JULY 15th, 1996 – Potter House, Charenwell

Everyone was up far too early in Harry's opinion. Today, he showered alone as he and his three bed partners from the night before (Hermione, Luna and Daphne) all did not have time for a leisurely bath together, which had Harry slightly miffed. However, today would be busy. It was his own damn fault, Harry thought. He was the one with the bright idea to get everyone flying and they had to be at the field at nine. The Longbottoms and Weasleys, all of whom had at least some people going, would join Harry's family for breakfast. This would also give Mallory a chance to run pregnancy tests on all the witches with permission who were not having a monthly visitor (a term Harry liked. The other one's creeped him out a little) or were already pregnant. Mallory would announce whatever results she had at breakfast. Harry dressed in his flying suit and jacket and headed to the Family Dining Room. It was a little after seven.

Mallory, Dora and Minerva would not be coming to the air field, but all Harry's other girls would be, although some were a little reluctant. Minerva was headed to her new office at Government House to begin her job as head of National Educational Development determined to get a school up and running as soon as possible. Mallory had her job at her clinic. Dora was going on a mission to Britain. She would use her abilities to create a disguise and act as Harry's Purchasing Agent at the Concubine Auction set to begin at nine. Neville's parents were the only Longbottoms not going flying today. Bill and Fleur would not be going either, nor Fred and George or their young ladies as they would be starting to set up their business. But all the other young women were going and all were here for breakfast.

Mallory was the last to enter. Everyone else was eating when she cleared her throat. "Today's results are in," she announced.

"Well?" several voices asked.

"First of all, I am far enough along, it seems, for the magical test. I am definitely pregnant! It's a magical baby and the indications are

well above average at that. Given the father, should that be a surprise?"

Several people chuckled. "What is it?" Luna called out. "I hate suspense!"

"Harry," Mallory said gently, "around the end of March next year, you're going to have a son!"

"Whoa!" Harry said. "That's brilliant!" After the congratulations died down, Mallory continued. "With you permission, Harry, I would like to name the boy in honor of the man who made a promise to me and the family who kept that promise."

"Oh?" Harry asked.

"I would like our son to be named Sirius James Black-Potter. Sirius promised me a child. James fathered the man who kept that problem and a serious Harry is just too depressing.."

"That's bad!" Hermione chuckled.

"Hope the kid has Padfoot's sense of Humor," Harry chuckled. "It's a wonderful name Mallory, but we're in for a whole new round of serious puns I think."

"That's why he's not Sirius Harry," Mallory chuckled. "I like the name and if this little one ever complains, we can always say..."

"Sirius made us do it!" Harry finished. "Okay, any other news?"

"There is," Mallory smiled. "We have five winners in this summer's baby boom lottery!"

"Who!" several voices pleaded. Mallory waited for it to die down.

"George Weasley!" Mallory said.

“That’s right!” he added pumping a fist. “But me and who?”

Mallory paused. “Angelina!” Who then proceeded to all but fly out of her seat, into George’s lap and perhaps she was a little over exuberant as she knock George and the chair over just as she landed on him and began kissing him senseless. The kiss broke and they were still on the floor.

“Erm, thanks Ange,” George said. “But are you sure a woman in your condition should be tackling her Husband?”

“I’m not made of glass, George.”

“While I’m sure nothing’s happened,” Mallory said, “a modicum of restraint would be advisable if only because it’s rough on the furniture. Might as well have fun now. In a few weeks, it gets ugly. By this time next week I expect to become close friends with a toilet.”

“What?” Harry asked.

“Morning sickness,” Hermione said.

“Although,” Mallory added, “for many women that’s a bad term. How can it be ‘Morning Sickness’ when you throwing up three or four times a day? But we do have a potion for that which is harmless to the little one. Once any of you begin feeling off, we’ll get you on it if you want. Okay then, our next winner is ... Fred Weasley!”

“YES!” Fred said.

“Like that’s a surprise?” George added. “Mum said we’ve done everything at the same time from the day we were born.”

“Please don’t say anymore,” Harry said. “I fear we’ll end up in ‘Too Much Information Land’ real quick.”



“ Says He-Who-Shall-Soon-Have-More-Wives-Than-Years,” Fred said. “Okay then, who’s my lucky girl. Although I think we can rule out Alicia.”

“Why?” Harry asked.

“Monthly Bill today,” Alicia said.

“Argh! I knew we’d get that information overload thing!” Harry moaned.

“The winner is,” Mallory said. “Verity!”

“Proof that we are not identical,” George said as Verity hopped into Fred’s lap for a congratulatory kiss, “I start with my youngest. Fred takes age before beauty.”

“Hey!” Verity said throwing a napkin at George. “Good thing I’m Fred’s girl and not yours. I might have been offended!”

“Our next winner is Bill Weasley!” Mallory said and was surprised that Fleur was immediately into her husband’s arms. “How did you know, Fleur?”

“As Mary and Sam only completed their Bonds last night after the Ball, who else could it be?” Fleur replied.

“Last night?” a voice asked.

“Stacey told us she did on Thursday,” Mary said, “Can’t let her have all the fun.”

“Next up, Neville and Susan Longbottom!” Neville was soon smothered by his red haired love. The older Longbottoms were the first to congratulate the couple.

“And Neville,” Fred jokes, “formerly shy and unassuming, is first to sweep the field...”

“Getting all his lovelies preppers in a fortnight or less,” George added.

“It’s a rough job,” Neville smiled, “but someone’s got to do it.”

“I think it’s the trees,” Amber added.

“Definitely the trees,” Susan agreed.

“Trees?” Fred and George asked.

“Too much information,” Harry said. “You don’t want to go there.”

“Kind of like libraries for Harry and his lot,” Susan added.

“We are intrigued,” Fred said.

“And we are not saying anymore,” Harry said. “That’s four Mal.”

“And Harry makes five,” Mallory said. “Well, Harry and Dora make five.”

“What? Me?” Dora asked in shock.

“Playing with Harry is not without consequences,” Luna said with a smile. “I’m still hoping for mine.”

“I just didn’t expect it so soon is all,” Dora said. “Took my Mum a while she said.”

“Congratulations,” Harry said, “and where’s my kiss?”

MONDAY, JULY 15th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell.

Dudley walked past the kitchen in hopes of making it to the front door for his daily run without being stopped or asked any questions. For whatever reason, his parents had not waited up for him to come in

the night before. By his previous standards, it was an early evening for him. After the ball, he took Clara out for a nice yet inexpensive dinner and then walked her back to her place where they talked for a while before he decided it would be a good time to leave her. It helped that she yawned. After a nice hug – which surprised Dudley both because she initiated it and that he had not tried for more – he walked home to find his parents had gone to bed much earlier than usual. That was not good. They probably knew.

“BOY!” Vernon yelled as Dudley walked past. Dudley ignored him. In this house the only person called “Boy” was named Harry. “Boy! I’m talking to you!” Dudley was now in the main living room and was nearing the door and his run with every step. He was not going to run, although it was tempting. He felt a hand grip him by the shoulder and try to spin him around. With a sigh, he reluctantly cooperated.

“Just where the hell do you think you were last night, Boy? Out to all hours?” The look on his father’s face was one that at one time had been used for Harry. His mother was now in the room as well and Dudley was not sure what the look on her face meant.

“You talking to me?” he asked innocently.

“Who the bloody hell do you think I was talking to?!”

“The Freak,” Dudley said. “Though I never knew he could make himself invisible...”

“How dare you talk about that unnaturalness, Boy! You know the rules!”

“First of all, Wanker, my name is not Boy,” Dudley said. “Second of all, this isn’t Britain. So piss the fuck off!”

“They must have done something to him, Vernon,” Petunia said. “That’s not my Dudley.”

“Well? You some freak then? Where’s Dudley?”

“I am Dudley Dursley,” Dudley replied. “But the useless git you called a son decided about a year ago he did not want to be your son...”

“WHAT?”

“I got a little tired of stealing money for drugs,” Dudley said. “Decided I’d become a decent human being instead of a wanker like you. I do hope Mum made it with the dustman ‘bout nine months before I was born. Hate to think I’m actually related to a narrow minded, bigoted wanker like you.”

“What’s gotten into you,” Petunia shrieked.

“I saw the light,” Dudley said. “Thanks to those damned dementors, I saw what I was becoming and I didn’t like it one bit! Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m late for my run...”

“You’re going nowhere!” Vernon said. “We’re packing our things and heading back to Britain!”

“And why would you want to do that?” Dudley asked. “You said yourself that you blow it here with your Company and you’re on the dole.”

The man winced.

“And to be honest, I have no desire to ever see that place again,” Dudley added.

“WHAT?”

“You heard me! I happen to like it here! But if you don’t like it, fine. Just don’t expect me to come back with you.”

“HOW CAN YOU? YOU DO KNOW THAT FREAK BOY RUNS THIS PLACE, DON’T YOU?”

“Actually, he’s more like the Queen. Figurehead mostly.”

“And how would you know that?”

“He told me.”

“WHEN?”

“Yesterday when Clara and I met him at the Ball...”

“You know he’s cavorting with whores?” Petunia asked.

“I’ve met his Ladies,” Dudley growled, “call them that name again and I will defend their honor!”

Vernon seemed to have had enough and took a swing at Dudley. Dudley, however, was not a junior-heavyweight boxing champion for nothing. He easily dodged the blow and gut punched the man for the trouble, dropping Vernon to the floor. “Harry may not have been allowed to use magic to defend himself from you,” Dudley said, “I don’t need magic to take you down. And you!” he said pointing at his mother, “apologize for what you just said or else this waste of air is really going to get it!”

“Dudley how could you?” Petunia asked.

“What?” Dudley replied as if he had done nothing. “That’s how this fat lump deals with kids he doesn’t like. You mean we’re supposed to take that?”

“Why are you defending him?”

“I don’t know! Maybe it’s because I should have been doing that since I could walk? You’re both pathetic.”

“HE’S A FREAK!” Petunia yelled.

“And you will apologize for that as well,” Dudley said. “And you better get used to the idea of ‘freaks’ as you call them, because travel abroad is being restricted to government business only. That means you can’t leave even if you want to. It’ll be announced today – not that it matters all that much since the people here don’t like to leave. As for ‘freaks,’ we’re the ‘freaks’ in this country. Unlike most people here, we can’t do magic.”

“WHAT?” Petunia gasped. Vernon just groaned.

“Most people here are just like Harry,” Dudley said. “Clara’s a very nice girl and I like her a lot and I don’t give a rat’s ass that she happens to be a witch!” Dudley then kicked Vernon in the gut.

“What was that for?” Petunia asked.

“Apologize! I wasn’t kidding!” Vernon got another kick to the gut when Petunia did nothing. “I’m going for my run now,” Dudley said. “If you are still the same idiots when I get back, I would appreciate it if you leave my flat and find other accommodations.”

“You’re flat?”

“Look at the contract!” Dudley said remembering that Harry had said the flat was in his name, not his parents. He turned and left the flat before either of his “parents” could reply. The only part of him that wanted them to be around was the part that had not learned how to cook. But, he could always go over to Clara’s for a meal...

MONDAY, JULY 15th, 1996 – Auction House, Diagon Alley, London, U.K.

Dennis Darby was a purchasing agent. Most of his year was spent purchasing items either here or abroad and well as acquiring hard to obtain potions ingredients for various clients, most of whom preferred to be kept out of any negotiations for any number of reasons. He personally did not care. He earned on commission, thus the more his client paid, the more he earned. Still, most clients did not give him an open purse to work with. This day was usually active for him. Today

was the concubine auction and what had appeared to be a weak year only weeks before looked as if it was now a buyer's market. He looked through the final edition of the catalog, updated as of this morning just in case any of the lot numbers managed to get married or become Consorts since the last update.

He was pleased to see there had been no deletions. There were still fifty young, fresh lots that were favored as toys by discerning buyers. The resale market held more than that, although to be honest only about twenty-two were really likely to attract a buyer of any sort. Any item over twenty-five years of age typically would not sell at auction, unless there was a customer in need of a nanny or some such. Even then, they still preferred the younger the better.

Most of his clients today were tight with their money. Aside from two, he was limited to bids under four hundred Galleons. One was willing to go as high as six hundred for a young, fresh witch. Another was willing to go as high as eight. He had a fourth who was unwilling to go over three hundred, unless the girl was under fourteen or she had a sister on the block. Then he could bid up to seven hundred. Given the history of pricing, he was certain most of his clients would be very satisfied.

He noted a new face in the audience. This was not exactly a well attended event. Over the years, he came to know the small community of purchasing agents who attended this auction. It was rare to see a new face. A well dressed man sat across the aisle from him with a copy of the catalog and a newspaper. He looked foreign. As this was one of the largest "slave" markets left in the wizarding world, it was not unusual to see a foreign buyer. But even then, most were known. Dennis wondered what this new face was doing here.

The new face was, in fact, Dora Tonks. She was in disguise as a purchaser from the Middle East, which was known for both brothels and harems, so a purchaser at a flesh market from there would not be a surprise. As some of the wizards there had made money from oil found on their lands, it was also not surprising if her client appeared to spend freely. Her orders were to out bid everyone: no exceptions, no limit. Blind bids had been placed on fifty-one lots, all at two thousand Galleons which was eight to ten times market value. She

had no name here. To the Auction house, she was simply Buyer Thirty-Seven, the thirty-seventh and last agent registered to bid at today's auction.

A wizard walked up to the podium. "Good morning gentleman," he said as there were no ladies present apparently. "Welcome to the 1996 Auction. As you can see from your catalogs, we have quite a selection this year thanks to a large sell off by one of our largest sellers so we are confident that your needs will be met. As per custom, the suggested starting bid price for each lot is in your catalog. If we have a blind bid that is higher, the bids will open at twenty-five Galleons over that bid. Shall we begin?"

"Lot number one, Hannah Abbott, age sixteen. As with all the other lots, her vitals are in the catalog. Half Blood with her father being from an ancient line. Suggested opening bid is two hundred and fifty. We have a blind bid for her. Opening bids will begin at two thousand twenty-five."

Somebody must really want her for some perverse reason, Dennis thought. A huge bid on a specific lot was not unheard of. Lust made men do silly things. Dennis was not surprised there were no challengers.

"Sold for two thousand to Buyer Thirty-Seven. Lot Number Two, Patricia Abbott age fourteen, sister of Lot One. Suggested opening bid is two-fifty. We have a blind bid. Bids will begin at two thousand twenty-five."

Sisters, that's probably it, Dennis thought. He looked over at the foreigner who appeared to be focused on the cross-word. There were still more than enough items, so why get reckless.

"Sold to Buyer Thirty-Seven for two thousand. Lot Number Three is Cathy Abrams, a Half Blood and as pure as driven snow. She just completed her First Year and at age twelve is our youngest offering today. Suggested opening bid is three-fifty. We have a blind bid. Bidding will start at two thousand twenty-five."



This is interesting, Dennis thought.

“Sold to Buyer Thirty-Seven for two thousand. Lot Number four, A Pureblood pretty Natasha Adair, age thirteen. Suggested opening bid of three-fifty. We have a blind bid. Bidding will begin at two thousand twenty-five.”

Dennis watched with some disinterest at first as young witch after young witch was sold without challenge to this Buyer Thirty-Seven all for two thousand Galleons. The bidder either had a fool for a client or did not realize the resale markets would never pay anywhere near that. But as the remaining inventory decreased, he could sense other buyers getting nervous. No one was willing to challenge that high a bid, not for real at least. But just what was this buyer doing? There did not seem to be a logic to the purchases. Unless the buyer was fixing to corner the market, which would leave his clients without new assets, but he had no authority to bid anywhere near the current opening price. He had to wait and see if this buyer was not interested in a girl. Even then, he knew there would be a bidding war and the girls this buyer would not buy were going to go for far more than the book price or than he had suggested to his clients. There would be a break after twenty sales. He would need to work fast to consult with his wealthier clients, lest there be nothing for them.

“Lot Number Twenty, Bonnie Conner age thirteen, Muggleborn. We have a blind bid. Bidding will start at two thousand twenty-five. Two thousand twenty-five? Fair warning at two thousand and twenty-five? Sold to Bidder Thirty-Seven for Two Thousand Twenty-Five Galleons. We shall now take a twenty minute break.”

Dennis and many others were jumping to their feet and heading to make their floo calls. Dennis noted that the foreign gentleman seemed as if he was not to be distracted from his crossword. He found an open floo and placed his first call.

“Professor Dumbledore?” he called out.

“Ah! Mr. Darby. So how goes the Auction?” the old professor asked.

“Quite well for the sellers, sir,” Dennis replied. “A blind bidder has purchased the first twenty new girls at two thousand a head. There have been no challenges, Sir. But there is no pattern which suggests to me that the bidder is seeking to acquire most if not all of this year’s fresh crop. Do you wish to challenge this bidder for your purchase for your associate?”

“No Dennis. A used article will suffice, thank you.”

“Yes sir!” He immediately made another call. It was a new client, but a buyer for the son of one who made a purchase every year, so he wanted to maintain the relationship. Although the boy was only sixteen, the incarceration of his father and the end of the marriage between the boy’s parents had allowed him to attain his majority under an obscure family tradition. Dennis did not really care about the legalities, so long as the boy could enter into a binding contract and pay the purchase price plus his commission. For whatever reason, however, the boy was buying through a third party. Dennis had no way of knowing that Draco Malfoy was still in the hospital and would be for at least two more weeks.

“Mr. Parkinson?”

“What is it?” a hostile voice replied. The call was apparently to a bedroom and the man was obviously enjoying a young woman’s attentions. This man had to be the most arrogant person Dennis had ever associated with. “So what’d you get me? I do hope it’s young Mudblood filth!”

“There have been developments. Mr. Parkinson. Unexpected developments.”

“What’s so unexpected? Slags are slags.”

“The first twenty went for two thousand a head, Sir.”

“TWO THOUSAND? I take it they were Purebloods.”

“Only one. Most were Mudbloods.”

“For two thousand? That’s outrageous! Surely there will be more reasonable sales later.”

“It’s all to the same buyer, Sir. There is no logic to the purchases unless one accepts the possibility that this buyer intends to purchase every fresh witch up for sale.”

“Indeed? Why would anyone want to do that?”

“I am at a loss to see reason, Sir. He cannot hope to resell any of them and make a profit.”

“Interesting. Well, just wait and see if there’s one bint he does not want and buy her.”

“There’s bound to be a bidding war, Sir. Like me, agents have their orders. Their customers want product. Like me, floo calls are going out to suggest challenging this bidder or a much higher bidding range should the bidder stand down on one.”

“I’ve already authorized five hundred.”

“I’m afraid that would only get your foot in the door, Sir. My guess is a thousand at least and probably more. If any challenge this buyer, the price for what is not wanted might change. But if the buyer stays in, that change will be an upward trend and might well affect the resale market as well.”

“I see. Has anyone challenged?”

“No Sir.”

“Who’s next up”

“A Mudblood named Simone Fanning.”

The man nodded. "Three thousand. Let's see if this buyer is serious. Three thousand for any sixteen year old, or any Hufflepuff or Gryffindor. But no more than two purchases."

"And if he is? If he out bids you?"

"Wait for the Patil twins and bid up to nine for the lot."

"In the unlikely event you are outbid?"

"If you can't get a fresh one, contact me about a used item. I will not leave this empty handed"

"Sir." The man's a bloody fool. He was acting as a strawman for the betrothed of his daughter. By all accounts, the boy was a real piece of work. His father's estate has been confiscated and surely he can't afford to play in this market with whatever he has in a trust fund. Perhaps this Parkinson person was paying. As long as the money was good, it really did not matter. Sixteen girls out of the next twenty fit his client's bill. So Dennis would be bidding on them. He was almost certain that he could bid more than three thousand and still lose. But one thing was certain, it would flush out the agent for this Buyer Thirty-Seven. As he resumed his seat, he saw the foreigner still focused on the crossword. If he was a betting man, his money would be on the foreigner as he knew the others here and there was an unwritten rule not to drive up prices like this. Leave it to a foreigner to enrich the sellers and leave the Purebloods of Britain who deserve such toys empty handed!

"Next up, Lot Number Twenty-One, Simone Fanning age sixteen and Mudblood. We have a blind bid. Bidding will start at two thousand twenty-five."

Dennis raised his hand.

"Now at two thousand fifty," the barker called. Dennis looked for a reaction. Sure enough, the foreigner moved. "Two thousand fifty. Now at two thousand one hundred. Two thousand one hundred," the barker called as Dennis bid. "Now at two thousand two hundred. I

have a bid of two thousand FIVE hundred,” he said as the foreign chap made a hand sign indicating the new bid. Dennis was not told to buy this girl, just to bid on her. “Now at two thousand six hundred. Two thousand six hundred? Fair warning! Sold to Bidder Thirty-Seven for two thousand five hundred.”

Dennis decided not to push the bidding over twenty-five hundred for now. Thus it was that Jennifer Faulken, fourteen; Michelle Graham, thirteen; Tammy Grey, fifteen; Wendy Hendricks, fifteen; Anna Jenkins, seventeen; Megan Jones, sixteen; Agnes Lester, fifteen and Su Li, sixteen all went to Buyer Thirty-Seven for twenty-five hundred.

No one other than Dennis was in any of the bidding. It seemed they were all waiting for any witch this buyer was not interested in. As Lot Number Thirty-One was a thirteen year old Slytherin and the Parkinson chap had not told him to bid, Dennis let her go. She went without challenge for two thousand. Dennis decided to push harder on the next one, a girl named Elaine Manning, fourteen years old from Hufflepuff. He ultimately bid twenty-six hundred. But the foreigner immediately bid twenty-seven and Dennis stopped. Dennis bid twenty-seven on both Natalie McDonald and Morag McDougal, only to be out bid again. He bid twenty eight-hundred on thirteen year old Alice McGregor, only to lose again. A Slytherin girl, age fourteen was next and went unchallenged to the foreigner for two thousand. That left three girls in this bidding period until he was allowed to go higher for the last two in this round, the Patil twins. Denis went to his limit on all three. The foreigner bought them all for thirty-one hundred a piece.

“Lot Number Thirty-Nine, Padma Patil. She’s a sixteen year old exotic of Indian ancestry and yes, Lot Number Forty is her twin sister. Any man’s idea of fun. We Have a blind bid and will start the bidding at two thousand twenty-five.”

Dennis met the bid and kept bidding, watching the price rise above three thousand. He was authorized to pay up to nine thousand for this pair and would not bid over forty-five hundred for this one. Even as it was, each bid was setting a new record for the highest price ever paid for a concubine at auction.

“Bidding is at four thousand,” the barker said. “Four thousand one hundred,” he added as Dennis raised. It seemed this foreigner never hesitated. “Forty-five hundred. Bid is forty-five hundred. Sir?” He looked at Dennis. He shook his head. “Fair warning at forty-five hundred. Sold to buyer Thirty-Seven. Now we have her sister Parvati. They are identical in all respects. I believe her sister set the opening bid. Do I have forty-five hundred?”

The foreigner raised his hand.

“ At forty-five hundred.” Denis raised his hand. “And forty-six hundred. Forty-seven hundred. Forty-eight hundred, Five thousand.” Denis was authorized nine, he was going to break this foreigner, he thought. Several minutes later, he pushed the bid to eight-five hundred expecting the foreigner to blink or something. He saw the man make a hand sign. “The bid is now ten thousand. Ten thousand to you, Sir,” he said looking at Dennis. The foreigner seem wholly unconcerned about price. “Fair warning. Sold to Buyer Thirty-Seven for ten thousand.”

Another break was taken. There were only ten new girls left, but it was now obvious that unless one of them was not part of this foreigner’s list, there was no point in even bidding. The man started far too high to begin with and had no limit. After the break, the last ten “virgins” were sold to Buyer Thirty-Seven at his opening bid of two thousand Galleons. After the Patil sale, Lots Forty-Seven and Forty-Eight, another set of twins by the name of Tennyson did not generate any interest. No one wanted to play in this box. Most of the other agents never even bothered to return to the room, waiting for the resale lots and hoping this foreign chap was not interested in used articles. For their clients, they now had to explain that the sky was the limit on fresh blood. Unless you had unlimited money to spend on a girl, it was pointless to try.

Dennis Floo called Parkinson who then made it abundantly clear he was not buying used. Apparently, the little snot he was buying for was not interested in broken witches or had changed his mind. Still, Dennis did have other clients and some of them remained interested if the price did not get out of hand. As Dennis predicted, once Lot

Number Fifty-One went up, a twenty-two year old witch with seven years service, the price rapidly exceeded normal. She should have gone for no more than three hundred and went for seven fifty. Dennis managed to buy the next lot for Dumbledore, a twenty-five year old with ten years service and a proven breeder for six hundred. But this market, while not as insane, was already setting its own records. What was worse, Dennis knew, was that the sellers next year would expect similar prices.

To his surprise, Buyer Thirty-Seven had not left, but was back to his crossword. Eventually Lot Number Sixty came up, a twenty year old witch named Penelope Clearwater with five years on her back. Normally, as a Muggle Born, she might fetch three hundred, if her catalog description raved about her prowess in the sexual arts, and this one was silent. Maybe two hundred ordinarily, Dennis thought. "We have a Blind Bid. Bidding starts at two thousand twenty-five." There were groans from other agents. All else aside, this Clearwater whore was good looking. She sold for two thousand, setting another record price for her category of slag. Once she was sold, Buyer Thirty-Seven walked forward and collected fifty-one Titles. In addition, he apparently was refunded gold! The man had prepaid an account, spent over a hundred and twenty thousand and had not even reached his limit! As he left the room, the other agents applauded, then resumed overpaying on the remaining lots.

MONDAY, JULY 15th, 1996 – Riddle Manor, U.K.

Pius Thicknese stared at the parchment in front of him. He knew the numbers by heart, but still could not believe it. After all the careful planning, in less than a month the Death Eaters had suffered a series of catastrophic setbacks. The only silver lining was that the Dark Lord and been incapacitated for three weeks now, although no one knew why or for how long. The news he held would not bode well for the messenger, and if the Dark Lord awoke that messenger was him.

One month ago, the Death Eaters had sixty-seven people in Operations. This was the part of the organization that committed planned acts of murder or terror both within the Wizarding World and against Muggle targets. This did not include random acts by individuals. These sixty-seven were both among the most

experienced and most vicious of all of those who bore the mark. The remaining Death Eaters focused on finance, propaganda, bribery, espionage, sabotage and other less overt or violent methods of undermining the current government and forces of light, or they were too new and untrained to stand up against the Ministry's Aurors.

The Dark Lord had spent the year since his return rebuilding his forces, stocking safe houses and supply depots and planning. In the last War, he acted too soon, he felt, which gave the other side time. Even then, but for the incident with Harry Potter, he was still on the verge of toppling the Ministry as his supporters and spies had prevented them from reacting until it was almost too late. This time, his subtle operations designed to paralyze the Ministry began at once and this time he planned to hit hard. His first operation was an attempt to lure Harry Potter into a trap. When that failed, he reacted swiftly with a plan to eliminate Potter's friends. By Death Eater standards, these were operations reminiscent of the later stages of the war, a large force deployed to overwhelm any opposition. Given that the covert operatives had the Minister for Magic, and by extension the Ministry and the Wizarding press denying the resurgence of their movement, the sudden blows should have been devastatingly effective, even if they failed to kill Potter.

In reality, the last month had been the worst defeat their cause had ever suffered. Although losing the Dark Lord back in 1981 had caused a cessation of that War, the organization remained dormant, not defeated. It still had money, supplies and fighters, just no leadership. Three weeks ago, about a week after his campaign began, the Dark Lord collapsed in pain and had remained unconscious ever since. But as he still lived, and as the Inner Circle believed the plans were still sound, they went forward. Eleven Death Eaters had been captured at the Department of Mysteries with only Bellatrix Lestrange avoiding capture. About two weeks later, thirty-six death eaters were set upon missions all over Britain. Only eight returned. Of the Operations section, only one Inner Circle member was left, and Augustus Rookwood had been seriously injured fighting that Lovegood fellow.

Just last week, that Potter kid became Lord Black and ordered the Goblins to confiscate properties for unpaid rents; properties that



“belonged” to Death Eaters or their principal financiers. Seven Death Eaters foolishly resisted the Goblin Collections Teams. All were killed. Worse, all of their carefully laid supplies were gone. Of the twenty bases scattered around Britain, only Riddle Manor remained in Death Eater hands. Worse, the estimate was that they had lost at least eighty percent of their funds to debts owed to Lord Black.

Pius Thicknese was a former Auror who had moved to a desk job years ago. He was also a Death Eater covert operative within the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Mostly, he was a spy. But every so often he could be expected to attempt to undermine the Department’s ability to respond to Death Eater attacks. He had been marked since 1976, twenty years and avoided any suspicion during the last war. His ability to undermine Auror operations, however, was limited. The Inner Circle had hoped he could throw them into confusion during the July 1st attacks. But the Head of Law Enforcement and Head of the Auror’s had consolidated certain activities, such as magical detection, under their auspices and he was effectively out of the loop that day. Had any of the Inner Circle who knew his role survived the attacks, he knew they would blame him for the failure. Fortunately, the only Inner Circle member who was not killed or captured did not know about his role and was blaming Bellatrix LeStrange for the failure who was conveniently dead.

It was Pius, however, who had confirmed to the Dark Lord’s satisfaction that Draco Malfoy was next in line for the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black. That fact was undeniable. But that damnable blood traitor had left that House to Harry Potter. Potter had moved decisively. Ignoring protests from the likes of Dumbledore himself, he had called House Black debts due and crippled the Death Eaters financially in one single stroke of a pen. That the Goblin nations seemed to have finally picked a side was almost as unexpected as the side they picked. The vile beasts had shunned the overtures of Dumbledore, the Ministry and the Dark Lord and were plainly in league with Potter. Potter had gone for their throats in a way no one had dared before, and there was nothing the Death Eaters could do to stop him. The only good news, if there was any at all, was that the boy had also gone after both Dumbledore and the Ministry. Severus had delivered a report that Dumbledore and his Order of the Phoenix was in more dire financial shape, relatively speaking, than

the Death Eaters. There were also reports of defections and dissent within that organization. The Ministry was also in trouble and would be hard pressed to extricate itself unless they could negotiate a compromise. But it was Potter who had all the leverage right now.

“Report,” a voice said.

Pius looked and saw that the Dark Lord had opened his eyes for the first time in three weeks.

“Milord!” he replied kneeling before his Master.

“You have a report Pius?” the Dark Lord asked in a hoarse voice. “And why you? Where is my Inner Circle?”

“Severus is at Hogwarts, Milord,” Pius began.

“As he should be. And the others?”

“Dead, wounded or captured, Milord.”

“What? How can that be? I sense truth in you, Pius, but we had no operations planned for today. Did the fools at the Ministry get lucky?”

“Er – in a manner of speaking, Milord,” Pius said. “We suffered a major setback two weeks ago, with further blows falling since.”

“Pius, our little misadventure at the Ministry was a little over a week ago,” Voldemort began.

“Milord, you have been unconscious for three weeks. It is now July 15th.”

“” What? What happened?”

“We do not know. I was told you screamed in pain three weeks ago Sunday and passed out. This is the first time you spoke since, Milord.”

“And the plans for the Ministry Six as the creative writers at the Prophet call those pathetic children? They went forward?”

“We sustained heavy losses for little gain, Milord.”

“Explain!”

“The diversionary attack on the Head of the DMLE was our only arguable success. Madam Bones and four Aurors were killed.”

“Excellent.”

“Of our attacking force, only Pettigrew returned and he lost his wand arm.”

“The others?”

“Six killed. Five wounded and captured.”

“The Blood Traitor Weasleys?”

“Were not home when our force attacked. It was a trap, it appears. None of our Death Eaters returned.”

“Longbottom?”

“The Dowager Longbottom was killed after killing two of our attackers. The Longbottom boy seems to have killed the other two, including Bellatrix Lestranger.”

“Impossible!” Voldemort said in shock.

“Her body was on display in the Ministry.” Pius said. “It is possible someone else killed her. But it was clearly a blasting hex. It took off

her entire right side. The Ministry is reliably informed that the lad could do that.”

“How could she ...”

“She might have been surprised,” Pius opined. “It is also possible she underestimated her opponent. We might never know.”

Voldemort could only stare. One of his best was killed by a fifteen year old. “That Lovegood girl?”

“The publisher killed one of ours and severely wounded two others. Rookwood is crippled. The publisher is dead, but his daughter has escaped.”

“And the Mudblood?”

“She and her family appear to have left the country altogether. We have a report of them in France the day after she returned from Hogwarts, but it is both dated and of questionable reliability. It is known their house is empty. They’ve moved somewhere. That was the only raid where we suffered no losses, but that may have been due to the fact there was no one there to inflict any.

“Between those raids, the Department of Mysteries and other actions in the last month, we’ve lost over two thirds of our Operations personnel. Out of sixty-seven fit for operations before, only eighteen are fit today. Forty-six are dead or in prison, Milord. Three are severely wounded and it might be months before they’re of use, if ever. And almost of the ones who’re fit are juniors with little or no experience in the last struggle.”

“Meaning we cannot even hope to break our comrades out of that hole,” Voldemort said.

“Not at this time; not even if we turn the dementors. No, Milord.”

“And the rest of the organization?”

“ From a manpower standpoint, our covert operatives were unscathed.”

“Which would explain your being here?”

“It would. Our remaining operations personnel have been deployed in the hopes of making up for our other recent losses.”

“Other losses?”

“It would seem the new Lord Black is no friend of ours, Milord.”

“Then kill that Malfoy spawn!”

“It would do no good, Milord.”

“WHY NOT?”

“Because the Malfoy brat is both useless to us and not the new Lord Black.”

“I seem to recall, Pius, you verified that the young Malfoy was the next in line.”

“Indeed he was, Milord. However, the previous Lord Black saw fit to disinherit him in favor of a Half-Blood relation.”

“WHAT? WHY? WHO?”

“The previous Lord Black despised the Pureblood agenda,” Pius replied. “He alienated himself from his own family not because some supported our cause, but because most support our ideas if not out methods. He turned his back on centuries of his family’s beliefs, avoided following his ancestors into Slytherin House, and ridiculed and harassed our beliefs and supporters since he was a lad. As an adult, he was unabashedly opposed to Pureblood beliefs and traditions and killed our people on sight. The Malfoy’s and others assumed his harsh treatment by the government might had led him to

see the error of his ways. Obviously, he never did and passed his estate to a young man his ancestors would have deemed unworthy. I regret, Milord, the Will is ironclad and the estate has passed beyond any control or subversion by us or any others.”

“And to whom did one of the wealthiest estates pass?” Voldemort asked. Despite the family Black’s belief in Blood Purity, the main line family produced but one Death Eater and never could be coerced into donating a single knut or overt vote to the cause.

“Harry Potter, Milord.”

“Then all is not lost,” Voldemort said. “He is too stupid and weak to know what to do with his new found status and wealth.”

“I fear, Milord, you underestimate him,” Pius said.

“I HAVE FOUGHT HIM!”

“And as you have noted, he is but a boy and yet only he and Dumbledore have fought you and lived. He has not even reached his full magical potential, which seems to be such that it may well eclipse Dumbledore himself in time.”

“It was luck!”

“Then he has far more of it than any mortal, Milord,” Pius said. “But, whether it is his luck or skill that has allowed him to survive this long, survive he has even when we were at strength. And now, the cub has turned lion and struck back.”

“Are you trying to tell me he killed or captured my Death Eaters?”

“There is no reason to believe that, Milord. Arguably, however, he has done far more damage to our cause in the last few days than the combined efforts of the Ministry and Dumbledore has managed to do in the last thirty years.”

“In just what way?”

“First off, he annulled the marriages of two of the daughters of his House: Bellatrix to Rodolphus Lestrangle and Narcissa to Lucius Malfoy.”

“And what of it? They are merely women! And am I mistaken or did you not tell me Bellatrix is dead?”

“They are mere women and Bellatrix is dead, but the marriage contracts give the Head of House Black significant control over the assets of his House be they monetary or flesh. Rodolphus and Lucius were not paupers before their marriages, but the bulk of their wealth came from those marriages. The annulment returned all Black property to Lord Black with interest. Lucius and Rodolphus might have survived the new Lord Black’s hammer fall, but not without their bride price intact.”

“What do you mean, Pius?”

His Death Eater handed him a piece of parchment. Voldemort scanned it. There were thirty-four names on it including Lucius Malfoy and Rodolphus Lestrangle. Twenty-two, including both Lestrangle brothers and Malfoy had a line through their names. Every name Voldemort knew. They were all either Death Eaters or families that provided his cause with most of its financial support. “I see. So?”

“Each of those families lived in a Black property,” Pius said. “All of them had failed to pay their rents for many years. It was overlooked before. As you recall, the Blood Traitor’s predecessor ignored his contractual rights insofar as our people were concerned in exchange for us not seeking donations from him directly. The recently departed could not seek enforcement as he was a fugitive until he died. The Potter lad called the debts due, demanded payment of all backed rents immediately plus interest and penalties, and ordered them evicted, their accounts and other properties seized and sold in payment of the debts. All owed well over two million. The ones who are lined out could not pay off their debts. They are wiped out financially and left with just the clothes on their backs. Only their

children might have any money, assuming there are trust accounts in the child's name."

"And their vaults? Their ancient family vaults?"

"Emptied," Pius said. "Everything of value was liquidated. This includes anything we stored in those properties as well as our operating funds which were divided among the vaults. We've lost all our safe houses save this one and all of our stores within those other houses. We have lost over ninety percent of our funds and over ninety percent of our annual revenue. While we are not broke, we are about where we were from a supply and fiscal standpoint back in the early 1960's."

"And our people did nothing to stop them?"

"The seven who did found out why it is unwise to resist the Goblins," Pius said. "They were killed."

Voldemort was feeling his temper begin to boil. Dead Death Eaters never bothered him. That Bones witch was dead, which almost made the losses acceptable. But he needed money to keep the Ministry from interfering with his plans. He had kept Fudge and the Ministry from interfering for a year now, but that was on the strength of his people's money. Without bribes to influence their behavior, there was the possibility they might actually do their jobs, which was not in the interest of his cause. More disturbing was the loss of the Lestrangle Vault. There was but one thing in that Vault of any real interest to him. But he was not about to ask about the Hufflepuff Cup. His servants were not entitled to that information. He had made that mistake once with Malfoy. The Cup was gone and he could no longer consider that horcrux safe. Then again, if he couldn't find it, maybe no one else could either. Besides, there was a reason he had more than one. Something else was wrong.

"Where is Nagini?" he asked.

"Your familiar has not been seen in some weeks," Pius said. "It is believed your incapacity had an effect upon the animal. Mulciber has



opined that the snake's size and age were related to its bond with you and that the recent illness killed it. But we cannot be sure of that because we have found no trace of it."

"I see. She must be found, Pius. She is important to me."

"I understand My Lord," Pius said.

Voldemort held his retort. Thicknese could not possible understand. "Is that all?"

"No Milord. It would seem we were not the only victim's of Potter's little temper tantrum."

"Oh?"

"Apparently, he learned that Dumbledore has been liberally using the Potter Vault for Order funding or other things unrelated to the maintenance of the Potter Estates or the Potter boy. Dumbledore has a month to come up with one point seven million or suffer the fate that our membership suffered, financially speaking."

"Does Dumbledore have the money?"

"According to Severus, not on hand," Pius replied. "He is liquidating assets to try and keep his real accounts solvent."

"Will he succeed?"

"Unknown, Milord. There is no evidence that success is certain, however. It may be that Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix will be as broken financially as we seem to be."

"Interesting. Why did Potter do that? Surely there's more going on than mere theft?"

“Possibly,” Pius said. “But theft alone justifies his actions against both Dumbledore and our own people. Not paying rent is theft, after all.”

“WE HAD AN AGREEMENT!”

“Never in writing and never by magical oath,” Pius said. “It would seem you were ill advised by Abraxas Malfoy in that regard and the prior Lord Black used that oversight to his advantage. It is possible he would never have submit had he not known he could get his money back whenever he so desired.”

Voldemort had to regain his control. He hated Purebloods almost as much as Muggles. That wasn't saying much, however. He hated them all. He hated their silly, mindless games and posturing. Had he not become as powerful as he was, had he not developed the ability and desire to kill and purged himself of all weakness and hesitation decades ago, these vile creatures would be lording over HIM! “Is there more?”

“Potter has seemed to have created some disaffection amongst Dumbledore's followers, Milord.”

“Oh?”

“Several have effectively declared themselves for Potter, defecting Dumbledore and leaving the country within the past week or so. Dumbledore pet family is clearly split. Severus says that many who have remained are suspect in the Old Man's eyes and might be required to take a loyalty oath...”

“Rather dark for the so called Leader of the Light.”

“Indeed Milord. I believe that it is possible the Order is not the threat to us it was even a week ago.”

“A glimmer of good news?”

Pius nodded. "Potter also called the Ministry to task," he continued. "He claims to be a sovereign of some sort and has demanded reparations for the illegal sale of his subjects over the years. Apparently, he has demanded the concubines in questions be repatriated or the Ministry pay him a hundred thousand a head. That is over four million. The Ministry has been given thirty days to comply or risk embargo."

"Such foolishness would not be a part of your report if there was no merit to it," Voldemort said.

"I cannot speak to the boy's alleged political status abroad. Here, however, he controls more votes than anyone else; enough to deadlock the Wizengamot indefinitely. But I have sources who say the embargo is not the idle threat of a delusional teen. The lad apparently can cut off a significant amount of the British Magical world's trade, particularly in food stuffs. Our world would be forced to shop in the Muggle World or face starvation. The Ministry is taking that very seriously, although I doubt they can pay the demand."

"And this so called country? What do we know of it? How soon can we attack?"

"It's called Charenwell and was thought to be a myth, Milord," Pius said. "No one knows where it is. Even if we did, we can't attack with only eighteen Death Eaters for its said to be very magical. If the legend is true, there are few if any Muggles there at all. Then again, if the legends are true, we could not hope to attack even with a hundred thousand Death Eaters. Any magical threat to the country and its people would be destroyed by the wards, it is said."

"There are no such wards!"

"That we are aware of," Pius said. "It does not follow there never have been. Much of the old magic was lost or suppressed by our supposed leaders over the centuries as it limited their ability to control the rest of the population. But, if that is true, then Potter is beyond our reach for now."

“And Dumbeldore’s as well?”

Pius nodded.

“He still has friends, perhaps we could lure him into a trap just as we did before.”

“He has had a falling out with the youngest Weasley boy,” Pius said. “The gossip is that if you executed the Blood Traitor Publically, Potter might show up to watch. His other friends have all disappeared. Their families are gone and their houses empty. It is doubtful he will return for anyone, or so some are believing.”

“So much for the Savior of the unwashed masses,” Voldemort nodded.

“It seems he has made it clear he has no interest in helping them at all.”

“Why then would he attack everyone?” Voldemort asked rhetorically.

“I would say, Milord, that young Potter has finally chosen a side in this struggle.”

“Oh? And what side would that be?”

“His own.”

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St.

Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P-boy
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen Howard Weasley, age 18 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (LONGBOTTOM).P

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May Spinnet, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (FRED).

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).P

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5). CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr). CONSORT (GEORGE).P

2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SD). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (PE). CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

## CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE: THE NEXT “FLIGHT.”

MONDAY, JULY 15th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, West Farm Charenwell

Harry looked up from his newspaper as the drone of airplane engines became noticeable. He had gone up with the first Flight that morning. There were seven others who had taken up one of the Tiger Moths after getting their magical flight training from one of the Elves. In his Flight, this included Ginny, Stacey and Daphne; two of whom had a fair amount of flight experience, if one included brooms. The engines meant that the second flight was returning, completing their own first solos. This flight includes most of those who avoided magical flying almost altogether. Neville was with this group as were Hermione and Luna. Astoria, who was the youngest of the sixteen first time airplane pilots, was the only one in this flight who had flown a broom outside of First Year flying lessons at school.

He watched as one by one the planes came into the field and landed. None of them seemed to have any trouble at all and all eight planes were soon on the ground and taxiing back to the tarmac in from of Flight Operations. Eight Elves were waiting to direct the planes to their parking areas. The first plane got closer, but Harry could not see who the pilot was. He watched as the plane followed the Elf's signals, turned to its parking space and when signaled, shut down its engine. The pilot was soon out of the cockpit and walking towards him. She pulled off the leather flight cap and he could see who it was now. She was the first to take off, so naturally she'd be the first back. It was Astoria.

“Well?” he asked expectantly.

“That was wicked!” she said with a smile. “Almost as good as Harry Time, but not quite. We get to do that again?”

“If you want.”

“Great!” she said before giving him a good kiss. “So is Daphne around?”

“Inside,” Harry said.

“I’ll just go and ditch the parachute,” Astoria said with a smile.

Luna was the next one back. It was often hard to tell what she thought about anything just by looking.

“It’s really peaceful up there,” she said with a slight smile.

“And I sensed a shift.”

“Oh?” Harry asked.

“Oh yes. Definitely moves towards the light for all of us,” she added before giving him a really good kiss. “I think this is a wonderful idea you’ve had.”

“Thanks. I’m glad you like it.”

Luna was already inside the building when Harry saw Hermione walking up the Flight Line from her plane. He was actually surprised to see a huge smile on her face. She didn’t say a word until after she all but kissed him senseless.

“Okay,” she said with a mischievous grin. “I suppose you can keep your little toys.”

“Toys? I assure you they’re quite real. So? What did you think?”

She smiled. “Definitely better than a broomstick! Honestly, I wish I had gone up earlier with you, Harry. But it was fun, I guess. Now mind you, I have no intention of flying upside down or something silly like that. But while you were up, we were shown some of the other planes and I definitely know I want to learn more.”

“Any plane in particular?”



“When are you planning to send for my parents?” she asked.

“Er – what does that have to do with planes?”

“Well, if it’s around my birthday, I figure I may well be qualified in more than the little Tiger Moth. I’d love to see the expression on Daddy’s face to know I fly the biggest plane on the field!”

“You want to fly the Lancaster?”

Hermione nodded. “Little me the big, bad bomber pilot!”

“Good! I was hoping you’d want to be a part of this.”

“How can I not be? I’m a part of everything that has to do with my Harry, aren’t I? But what surprised me is that I really did like doing that! Now excuse me, but those itty bitty planes have no loo and I could use one right now.”

She gave Harry a peck and headed into the Flight Operations building.

Twenty minutes later, the sixteen who had joined Harry for flying that morning were lined up outside of Flight Operations. They had all changed back into their regular clothes except that each of them was wearing their leather flight jackets. They stood in a single line and whether they planned it or not, they seemed to be organized along family lines. Hermione stood at the far right with Luna next to her and then the other four of Harry’s Girls. Next to Ginny, who was the last in the line, stood Neville and his two Ladies, followed by the two newest members of Bill Weasley’s House, then the three each from Fred and George’s Houses.

Harry was facing them along with Mr. Jennings and Mr. Owens and he watched as each of them, beginning with Hermione was handed the photograph taken as they each stepped from their planes following their first flight and then had their wings pinned to their jackets. The final bit of the simple ceremony was each one being

congratulated, addressed as Flying Officer and welcomed to the now growing ranks of the Royal Duchy of Charenwell Air Force.

MONDAY, JULY 15th 1996, Potter Manor, Charenwell.

A foreign looking gentleman appeared in the Conservatory dressed in a suit and carrying a brief case. Almost as soon as he appeared, he transformed; or at least his head did. The foreign, male façade melted away and the face and hair of Dora took over. She had a very self satisfied expression on her face as she headed for the main stairs and took them two at a time up to the second floor.

Several minutes later, all of Dora tried (and failed) to gracefully descend the stairs to the First Floor. She was wearing a simple yet flattering summer dress and the only clue as to her mission for the day was the brief case she still carried. She entered the Great Hall and saw that there was only one person present in the room. Even though she could not see the woman's face, she knew who it was from the hair. The woman was seated in a chair with her back to Dora and appeared to be reading a book. There was a chair opposite the woman, and Dora headed for it. She sat down and faced her Aunt.

"Afternoon Aunt Narcissa," Dora began.

Her aunt put down the book. "I'd prefer you wouldn't call me by that name, unless you would prefer Nymphadora," the former Mrs. Malfoy replied.

"Sorry Aunt Cissy," Dora said. Somewhere in there was a sense of humor. Both her Mum and Sirius had mentioned that about the younger Cissy. It was clearly repressed, but Dora was determined to find it. "So how has your day been?" she asked.

"H-Hermione gave me this book to look over," Cissy replied.

"I've been reading and making a few notes."

"Oh? What book is that?"

“She says it’s one of the ones you and the others have been working on the past few weeks. It covers the history of this place and a lot about your bonds; although I would dare to say it seems ... incomplete.”

“It is a work in progress,” Dora nodded. “We’d like to think it covers our full understanding as of today, but it’ll be some time before it could be considered complete in any sense. Minnie knows more about the history than anyone, but she has other duties. She knows some of the others are good at research, so when she can’t help, she gives them a list of books and journals here to look over. And the Elves Marta and William have been quite helpful as well.”

“Actually, I am more interested in the Bonds,” Cissy said.

“There’s far more in here than I had ever heard of, but it’s clear from reading that it seems to barely scratch the surface.”

Dora nodded. “You would think that since these magical bonds have been around for over a thousand years someone would have studied them in detail. Only one book has ever been written about them at all. Apparently the author was one of Luna’s ancestors and he was basing a fair bit of it upon legends and such. He did not have a witch bonded to him, it seems. A lot that he wrote is fairly accurate, but it was the wizard’s perspective, not the witch’s and he had little access to bonded witches in conducting his research. What you’re reading includes the perspectives and is based upon the bonded experiences of several witches.”

“It seems far more complicated then I had thought,” Cissy said.

“It is,” Dora replied. “If you look at just one witch, it can seem simple enough. But each bond is unique in its own way. In my case, I’ve had three bond mates. Each of my relationships was very different from the others.

“Mallory has had three as well and it’s the same for her. Moreover, her bond with our Harry is still very new. Her bond with Sirius changed over time. The Sirius she first bonded to was younger than

Harry and not nearly as serious as Harry is – pardon the pun. As Sirius Black grew into a man his relationships with others evolved. Mallory could never have love bonded with the boy Sirius Black, even if she developed feelings for him. He was not yet capable of the reciprocity required. He eventually matured.

“Then we also have Amber – that’s Lord Neville Longbottom’s Love Bound Concubine. Her first Binder was a right bastard, perhaps only marginally better than Lucius Malfoy. Her second was Neville’s father whose interest in her was strictly limited to having a caretaker for his son so he and Alice could go off and fight in the last war. Finally there’s Neville, who developed a strong attachment to her before he even knew her status. Of all of Amber’s Binders, Neville is the only one whose relationship with her was mature enough to allow the Love Bond.”

“And Lord Harry?”

“He may be barely sixteen,” Dora said, “but he’s had a very hard life despite what you may think or may have heard. He was never really a child. He’s a lot older inside than most, so provided we have the feelings needed inside, he is quite easy to bond to.”

“From what I’ve read, you all are saying that the two bonds are actually closely related,” Cissy said. “I was never told that. I was told they are as different as night and day. How can they be almost the same thing?”

“The Consort Bond is a rare form of natural magic,” Dora replied. “There are references to it going back as far as the magical historical record and legends about it from even earlier. The bond is created by both the right combination of emotions and magic and is sealed, for a lack of a better term, by an act of physical intimacy. In the cases of all three components, the key thing is that the witch and her bond mate enter into the bond as mutual, selfless acts. Their love for each other must be the selfless kind, the kind where each of them is willing to subordinate their needs in favor of their bond mate. Their sealing act of intimacy must also be the same; a sharing, an act for the other and not for themselves. There is some reason to believe that the need for

selflessness is the reason why it is only a witch who can initiate the bonding. Even then and even if she initiates it under the right emotional frame of mind, if the man's feelings for her are not as mature or selfless, the bond will not form.

“The results of a successful bonding can be quite powerful and beneficial to both the witch and her bond mate. Each does sacrifice something for the bond; namely that portion of their free will which might adversely affect their bond mate. But for that sacrifice, they gain a relationship that is much greater than the mere sum of its parts. For a long time in our distant past, this was the preferred bond between a witch and her life mate. Oddly, it's the only one of the magical bonds known that can work with a Muggle, but that's not important here. As you might well imagine (and despite all evidence to the contrary around here), it takes two special people for this kind of bond to form. In the majority of situations, it will not happen.

“While in all probability, the Consort Bond has always existed, the Concubine Bond was created. What information we have found suggests it was created with the best of intentions. Finding that one person with whom a Consort Bond can form is a matter of luck really. While the bond is not so rare as to be truly exceptional, it is rare enough. Although there is no way of knowing, it is doubtful that Hermione could have become the Consort of anyone other than Harry. It's not impossible, but the likelihood is very remote.”

“And yet he has two consorts,” Cissy said.

“Now that is truly exceptional,” Dora replied. “It can't happen at all unless Harry was the end of the line for two families. When Sirius disinherited Draco, he left the House of Black with but one wizard. Only Harry can keep the line going. As he is also the only wizard in House Potter, only he can keep that line going as well. So that condition was met. But even if that condition exists, there are so many other factors that suggest he would not get a second Consort.

“First of all, the emotional situation must be very much the same between the witch in question and Harry. That two witches might be able to love the same man is not unheard of, but for the second

Consort, that selfless thing is harder. She must enter into the bonding knowing of the first and without any selfish motivations. In other words and among other things, she must not and cannot envy the other Consort. Likewise Harry must have entered the bonding not for himself but for BOTH Hermione and Luna. Furthermore, he could not even begin to bond without Hermione being selfless herself. She has to have approved of his bonding with Luna without any reservations whatsoever. What is the likelihood of that?"

"And yet they did?"

"You will find they are exceptional young people," Dora replied with a smile. "Perhaps they are the only ones like them we can ever hope to meet in our lifetimes.

"But, the one truth from the old magic which remains to this day is that the best life for a witch is as a Consort. In addition to the fact her Husband will become a good one; it helps her magic as well. She'll never have a Squib for a child. Her children will be more magical than they could have been in any other pairing, thus increasing the possibility of future generations of magic. Long ago this was the preferred bond. Pureblood did not matter. It could not and has never produced more powerful magical lines. Only the Consort Bond or an equivalent has and will."

"So this Pureblood Supremacy I've been hearing all my life..." Cissy began.

"Is a load of dragon dung," Dora finished. "It is a love bonding that makes for powerful magic, not blood. Most all of the Squibs known came from Pureblood pairings. But a Pureblood Consort bond will never produce a Squib because that bond is love based, not blood based."

"Then where do you fit in?" Cissy asked. "Where do I, for that matter?"

"The Concubine Bond was invented over a thousand years ago for two reasons," Dora said. "First of all, it was done so that more

couples could one day enjoy the benefits of a love based magical bond, to include the stability, the mutuality, the strength of magic and healthy, magical progeny. It was also created during a time when there were far more young witches than wizards in the world. (A situation, by the way, that has remained virtually unchanged back in Britain.) The bond was also created with that problem in mind. That way, most witches could enjoy the benefits of the bond regardless of whether or not they were fortunate enough to find their natural bond mate.

“As you probably know, magic cannot force two people to love each other. But magic can inhibit free will. The Concubine Bond was invented so two people could be bonded in the hopes that love would come later. As it inhibited the witch, it could also allow her to accept being part of a harem, for lack of a better term. When the bond fully matures, which it can, there really is little distinction between the bond of a Consort and her Husband and the Concubine and hers. The fully mature bond is just as reciprocal in nature and just as beneficial to the parties.”

“Then why is it so horrible?”

“Because it is too easy for the wizard to abuse it,” Dora said. “It is designed to bind the witch to him against her will if necessary. It is based upon the magic of contracts and oaths, not love, and thus it does not require any emotional commitment by either party to begin to work. It does not require any selflessness on the part of either party and it has no effect whatsoever on the free will of the wizard when it first forms. He can choose to move forward and allow the bond to mature to its final, permanent state, or he can choose not to. If he chooses not to, he can do as he pleases without regard for her.

“The reason the Bond is considered horrible is that any wizard can get into one. Rather than a path to love, it can all too easily be used to enslave and solely for the selfish needs of the wizard. And later, as the Pureblood notions began to become popular, it was used to debase witches of what they considered inferior status, which in turn led to the true inferior status the witches now suffer in Britain today.

“And there is the added problem of the modern approach to the Bond. We usually don’t see it coming. We also get bound at far too young an age. Even if the wizard was not a selfish bastard who only took us for his own base pleasures, there is always the issue that he took us against our will. Our loss of innocence may be suppressed, but it is always there and makes it much harder for us to reach the emotional state necessary to begin the maturation of the Bond; assuming the wizard wants to go in that direction.

“Of the Concubines you have met here, only Minerva, Daphne, Astoria and Ginny managed to Love Bond with their first Binder. The younger ones knew Harry at least a little before he bound them. They knew enough about him to know he was not the type who would abuse them, so they were open to the Bond from the beginning. And he showed them practically from the start that he was concerned for them and thus could have feelings for them beyond the normal teenage male reactions in their pants. It took Minerva almost three years to open to the Bond with her first Love Bond. I never did, even though Sirius was never mean to me and never treated me like a whore.”

“And yet you are bound that way to Harry?”

Dora nodded. “In a way, Sirius was tainted with my original bonding and a part of me could not forgive him for that. It was Sirius’s friend who ‘broke’ me. He could because Sirius gave him that authority around the time I was born. He did because Sirius told him that there was another girl out there after he cut off permissions to Mallory. I was bound because Sirius was in prison and his friend knew where my contract was and took me the moment I was old enough practically. That was the way I saw him until very, very recently. It wasn’t until after I became Harry’s that I learned there was more to the story. He was never mean or cruel to me. I did come to enjoy the sex. But emotionally, he ruined my life in many ways and the fact he waited for me to be old enough made it even worse for me. I don’t hate him. I don’t think I ever really have. But I could never love a man that selfish – and he was in a way – and I could never love the man who allowed it to happen.”



“And Harry?”

“Harry is a very different person. While he’s not much older than Sirius was when Sirius took his first Bond, in many ways he’s far older.

“To young Sirius Black, Mallory was fun. She was a hormonal teen boy’s fantasy: a girl who never complained and was always ready. Moreover, as she had prior experience, she knew things of a sexual nature that he could not possibly have imagined then and was more than willing (or so it would appear) to play show and tell with him and his friends.

“While it might appear to be otherwise, Harry does not see us as playthings and never has. He had no need for any of us in that regard. He has never asked for or demanded sex from us after we were initially bound. As far as I know, he has never even initiated it really. But we all had a need for him in a way. We all knew what kind of life we could have faced if Harry let us go. Harry knew that too. His only concern was our welfare, not his libido and even then, he never would have done a thing if Hermione had not convinced him that by taking us in as his bound Concubines he could actually help us and keep us safe.

“He took us not out of his needs, but for ours. And by our needs, I don’t mean the sex, although it is a wonderful side benefit. He showed us he truly could and would care for and about us without question or condition. Thus, when Daphne took her leap of faith mere moments after he took her virtue and succeeded becoming Love Bound to Harry, we all did moments later.

“Harry promised us all before we even bound to him to treat us as part of his family and allow us to be women in every sense of the word. That he would do that speaks to his maturity and the enormity of his heart, which again makes the maturation of the bond not just possible, but probable. Since then, with Ginny and Stacey, they knew going in what he was willing to offer them and they were Love Bound in short order as well. We didn’t know it until recently after a lot of research, but Harry has promised all of us the right to a fully mature

bond with him. It is our choice to take him up on that wonderful offer and so far he's eight for eight."

"So you're okay with this?" Cissy said in surprise.

Dora nodded. "I'm okay with this because I will achieve the full bond with Harry. Mallory and Minerva were part way there with another wizard before Harry. But they were not all the way there and when their wizard died, they were arguably back to square one. But they too will complete the bond and when that occurs, it is permanent, just like the Consort Bond is permanent. Harry is and will always be our last wizard."

"What makes it permanent?"

"A child born of our love for each other," Dora said. "The Consort Bond is permanent at its inception. The intended Concubine Bond is permanent upon conception and birth. Somehow Harry knew this instinctively. Or Hermione did. Or maybe they both did. But, you may read in that book you have about Harry's ancestors. They were taught this from an early age. Most all of them had Concubines because they were taught with their wealth comes a duty to see to the welfare of others. They took in Concubines in part to give those women the life they deserved."

"In part?"

"The Potter line is one of the oldest lines in Europe by design in a way," Dora replied. "Should the primary wife or Consort fail to produce an heir ... well, that has happened, and yet there's always an heir. Likewise, there have been primary sons who refused to become the Duke or died before they could. But there has always been a son of the Duke as our Head of State."

"The concubines?" Cissy asked.

Dora nodded. "Mallory shall have a son. We learned that this morning. Should Luna fail to have one, Mallory's son will be the next Lord

Black. Should Hermione not have a son, then the next Duke will be the son of one of Harry's Potter Concubines."

"And if not? What becomes of them if they do not become the heir? What becomes of the daughters?"

"It is illegal to sell women into bondage in this Country," Dora said. "All of the children will be Harry's children. He will see to them all. Aside from that Heir of the Line, there will be no distinction between any of them based upon their parentage either."

"So the Dukes brought in breeding stock?"

"All were brought in with the hope they would achieve the full bond with their Duke. Most all achieved the full bond in time, which is why almost all of the 40,000 or so witches and wizards born in this Country are related to Harry. They are the distant sons and daughters of a Duke, either through his Consort or wife, but mostly through his concubines."

"So this is a Pureblood culture of a sort?"

"I doubt if any who were raised here could tell you that even if it were the case. Many meet their mates abroad and they do not come from a culture that cares about 'breeding.' This culture marries and bonds for love only. We have a fair few Muggles here, all married into magical families. For the people in this country, magical heritage is the country, not the person. Your parents do not matter here. You rise or fail on your own.

"Harry's Great-grandfather is the only recorded arranged marriage in centuries, and that was made because of issues at the time in Britain, not here. Harry's Great-grandmother – a Black from our line by the way – hated this place. She hated it because the people did not consider her breeding of any import."

"If what you're telling me is true..." Cissy began after a pause, "then my whole life has been a lie!"

“In many ways, all of our lives in Britain were lies,” Dora said. “Pureblood culture is slow suicide, not a path to greatness as many believe. The Purebloods are dying off or losing magic altogether. In Britain, we’re told they teach all the magic that is fit to teach. The reality is they teach all the magic that the average, magically weak pureblood can be expected to handle. The average Muggle Born is more powerful magically than the average Pureblood. There are exceptions. There are lines such as the Longbottoms, Lovegoods, and Weasleys which were not horribly inbred and are Pureblood only in the most legal sense of the term. Moreover, those lines usually sought Consort Bonds, which strengthens magic.”

“Then why is that bond scorned back in Britain?” Cissy asked.

“Two reasons that we can think of. First, for the Pureblood Elites, you cannot arrange the bond. If the bond must be with a Muggle Born or a Muggle, that is the only option. Second, for the wizards you are not truly in charge. Your Consort has an equal voice in all things because that is the relationship the Bond creates. Do you think someone like your father or Lucius Malfoy would want a relationship where he was not in total charge of his family?”

“No.” Cissy admitted. “They were all about control.”

“Which is a sacrifice they would have to make to bond with a Consort. She would be his equal, not his vassal.”

“And where do you stand with regard to Harry?”

“There is a slight hierarchy at work,” Dora admitted. “As between his Consorts, Hermione is slightly higher than Luna. Within House Black, I and my Black sisters are slightly lower than Luna. But the reality is that the differences are so slight as to be unnoticeable now that our bonds have begun to mature. Harry is arguably at the top. But while he might make decisions, he expects input from all of us who have something to offer. In reality, we are becoming a team with each of us a contributing member and each as important as the others.”

“You don’t mind being but one of many?”

Dora shook her head slowly. "We can do far more together than as individuals. Of that we are all certain. I am happy, we all are. I think what Stacey told me recently might be true. She said if the three years in hell as the Bound Concubine and whore of Lucius Malfoy is what brought her here to Harry, then those years might have been worth it in the end."

"I guess you've given me a lot to think about," Cissy said, just as the voices of others could be heard coming up the main stair. Cissy watched as two young men and eight women arrived all wearing strange jackets over their clothes.

"How'd it go, Dora?" Harry asked.

"First twenty were no trouble," she replied. "No one even thought to bid against us. Apparently some idiot tried to in the next round. We got most of that lot for between twenty-five hundred and three thousand. But the last two, the bastard ran up the price on me. Those Patil twins cost close to fifteen thousand."

"We got them, didn't we?" Harry asked.

"Yep, but I was getting ready to hex the wanker bidding against me. After that, no one bothered us again." She opened her brief case. "Fifty-one titles, bought and paid for. I've organized them by House. Here's your eleven," she added handing Harry a small stack of papers. "And thirteen for you, Neville. Clearwater's on top."

"Thanks," Neville said.

"Has he paid?" Ginny asked.

"He gave me twenty for the lot this morning," Harry said.

"What's this?" Cissy asked.

“Titles,” Hermione said. “The Concubine Auction was this morning. Mr. Alfonso Rahel of Tindukai here,” she said indicating Dora, “was our purchasing agent. We bought fifty-one girls.”

“Merlin’s Beard,” Cissy replied.

The others would be arriving in about an hour and Harry looked surprisingly nervous.

“What’s wrong, Harry?” Hermione asked.

“This one’s gonna be different, isn’t it?” he said.

“Oh? What do you mean?”

“Harry,” Daphne added, “you’ve bound before. You’ve even been a first time before.”

“Five first times,” Ginny said, “counting me.”

“Five wonderfully magical first times,” Astoria added.

“It’s not that,” Harry said. “In a way, the only ones here who had no idea what was going on when it happened were Hermione and me. You and Daphne knew. Ginny knew. Luna knew. You all knew you would be bound to me and what that might mean. This is going to be the first one who will have no clue about what it all means. She won’t know what could have happened. She’ll show up here not even knowing why she’s here or how it could have happened. It’s going to be different.”

“You have a point,” Dora said. “It will be different for her.”

“We are going to do our best, Harry,” Hermione said. “They are going to know why they are here. They are going to be told what could have happened and why this was the only way.”

“You mean why we think it was the only way,” Harry said sadly. “But I really don’t think this one will be nearly as accepting of this as the rest of you have been.”

“You can’t know that,” Hermione said. “But it’s good you’re thinking that way. It means you do care.”

“Of course I care,” Harry said. “That’s part of the problem. I want them to become a full part of this, but I’m not going to make them. She’s going to be terrified, isn’t she?”

“Will all those present who were not terrified with Harry their first time please raise their hands?” Hermione asked.

Dora, Mallory and Minerva were the only ones with hands in the air.

“I was terrified on so many levels,” Hermione said. “True, I didn’t know I was going to be your Consort. I didn’t know about any of these bonds. But I was afraid you might reject me. I might not be good enough for you. You might not find me attractive that way. I opened up to you a lot and was still afraid you might think I was loose or something.”

“I didn’t,” Harry protested.

“I know,” Hermione said softly. “But I was still scared you might.”

“I was afraid of the sex bit,” Luna said. “You were pretty experienced by then. I was afraid I would disappoint you that way.”

“Says the girl who gave us girl sex,” Harry chuckled. “You are wonderful, Luna.”

“I was there too,” Hermione said with a pout.

“She’s the one who started it,” Harry said.

“True, but I would have.”

“Point taken. Then again, you two chose this.”

“They both wanted to be with you,” Daphne said.

“Oh it was a little different,” Luna replied. “Hermione wanted to be with Harry. I knew I would wind up with someone once I lost my Daddy and hoped it would be Harry ‘cause I was already here. I probably would not have been so ... forward ... otherwise. That and I wouldn’t have been if Hermione hadn’t convinced me to try.”

“You did?” Harry asked Hermione.

She nodded. “She was resigned to becoming a concubine. She wanted me to convince you to buy her.”

“I would have been content as your Concubine, Harry,” Luna said. “I was actually less afraid of that. You would make me do what was necessary. I wouldn’t have to be the one to initiate it all. I’m happy with how it worked out, but the one thing I was truly afraid of was that you wouldn’t want me at all.”

“I was terrified that you hated me,” Ginny said. “That scared me more than anything. I was willing to do anything to convince you I was still your friend; that I had never betrayed your trust. I would have let you shag me in front of everyone to do that. I would have lost my virginity in front of my family without shame if that’s what it took. But I was afraid that you’d never like me again. I was afraid I’d really be nothing more than a ... a piece of meat to you.”

“We didn’t know you really,” Daphne said. “We were relieved it was not Malfoy, but still we could not know what would happen; except you would take us. Even after you explained things, we couldn’t be sure where we stood. Our experience was that wizards don’t care about witches and are only interested in heirs or their own sexual gratification. I was terrified it would be no different and worse, that Story would have to suffer too.”



“We hoped it would be different with you, Harry,” Astoria said. “But there was no way of telling until it was. In my case, I guess you could throw in that I had to lose it first. That and you looked scary big.”

“I had no reason to hope,” Stacey said. “I spent three years in hell. My fear was despite appearances it could get worse.”

Harry nodded. “You were all terrified of known possibilities,” he said. “The girl today is a Muggle Born. She probably has no idea anything like this could happen in our world. I really don’t want to be the one to show her just how sick this world is.”

“You also didn’t want to be the one to show that to us,” Daphne said nodding to Astoria. “Just be yourself, Harry. Be the same person who saved us that day. In the end, that’s what passed between us. You didn’t shag us, you saved us.”

“But we do like the shagging bits,” Astoria added with a smile.

“Harry?” Minerva asked.

Harry nodded.

“We’re going to work with them, you know. Just don’t expect them to reach the Love Bond stage as fast as we did. Some might. I wouldn’t be at all surprised if Katie Bell did. The others may take time. Daphne is right, though. Just be yourself and they will see what can be in time.”

Tabatha Collins was a sixteen year old witch. That had come as a shock to her and her family when they were told that five summers ago. A man had come to her home in Aberdeen saying he was from an elite school and she had earned an admission. This was a shock in and of itself as she and her parents never applied to any schools. She was set to go to the local Comprehensive. Her family, while not poor, was in no way comfortable enough to send her off to an elite school. But this school had apparently been ‘watching’ her over the years. She had special gifts that set her apart from most children her age, they were told. They couldn’t think of any. She was a good

student, but by no means extraordinary. She took piano lessons but was not some prodigy. She was boringly normal, really.

She was a boringly normal “Muggle Born” witch. The man was kind enough not to use that word. She was magical. That’s what the man said. Her Daddy had said that too, but he meant it as a loving father, not as a statement of some unknown talent. The man “proved” magic was real and managed to convince them that she was a budding magical herself. It was a gift, he said, and his school was one that nurtured the gift and taught the student how to control it, for without control it could be dangerous to her and to others. Her odd little incidents that had went unexplained for years would only get worse without proper training.

Fortunately, St. Andrews was not a boarding school. She could be boarded, if her family wanted her to, but it was not required. She would be given a special magic device that would take her to school at precisely 7:45 each morning and could be “programmed” to return her when her day was finished. That could vary as there were all sorts of magical activities (and some not so magical ones) that took place after classes. For five years, she had lived at home and went to her “Magic School.” Her younger brother Ian followed three years later and her sister Mia looked like she would probably follow when she turned eleven next summer.

Tabatha found that magic was confusing, interesting, fun, scary, easy and really hard all at the same time. She drove herself to learn as much as she could and generally enjoyed her classes and classmates. Some came from magical families. Many did not. After a couple of years, she noticed that many girls finished after taking their O.W.L.s. She wondered about that, but her Dad said it was similar in the normal world. If a student didn’t do well on the Muggle equivalent, some would simply leave school and begin working. Perhaps that’s what happened to her friend Stacey. The girl was a year ahead of her and started when Tabatha started her Third Year. But Stacey never came back after her O.W.L.s Tabatha wanted to learn as much as she could and wanted to go as far as she could. She had just received the results of her examinations and realized that she had done really well.

She was in her room reading a book when for no apparent reason she felt the need to stand up. As soon as she did, it was as if the whole world dissolved and reformed itself into something completely different. Her small room was gone and she was standing in a huge room filled with plants and fancy chairs and couches. Were she to guess, she would say this was some lobby in a fancy hotel. But she was not about to guess. She was either dreaming or there was some kind of magic at work. She realized she was not alone when a female voice said: "What is going on?"

There were six other young women nearby, all standing around with a confused look on their faces. If Tabatha was to guess, whatever it was that had just happened to her had happened to them. And apparently, whatever this magic was did not have a dress code. Two of the girls were in bathing suits, bikinis to be exact and one was just in her knickers. "Guess I picked the wrong time for a shower," she said. Her voice told more than the words. The girl was bewildered and probably scared.

"Good afternoon," a woman's voice said.

Tabatha looked and saw an older woman with light brown hair and a bundle of something in her arms. The woman had a black ribbon around her neck and Tabatha could see an engagement ring and wedding band on her left hand.

"My name is Dora," she said. "And I guess these robes were a good idea," she added indicating her bundle. "I got a set for each of you and ask that you put it on. It'll help us figure out who you are and where you go."

"Where are we?" the topless young woman asked.

"We'll get to that," Dora said. "Now, which of you is Penelope Clearwater?"

"I am," a voice said and Tabatha saw a tall young woman raise her hand. This Dora person handed her a robe that had the letter "N" on it for some reason.

“Tabatha Collins?”

She raised her hand and was handed her own robe. It had the letter “H.”

“Anna Jenkins?” Soon the topless girl was covered in a robe with the letter “G” emblazoned on it.

“Peggy and Elizabeth Nolan?” One was about Tabatha’s age and the other was clearly younger. They were the two dressed in bikinis. They soon had covered up with robes with the letter “B” on them.

“And that means you two are Victoria and Rachel Peters,” the woman finished handing the last set of robes with a large “F” on them. “Right then, follow me.”

No one had really said anything. Tabatha was still trying to process what was going on. It did not seem threatening, which was a good thing as her wand was in a drawer in her dresser. She wondered whether any of the others had wands on them as they were led into a very fancy parlor, like something out of a picture book of Buckingham Palace, she thought. There were four older women waiting for them as they entered. Tabatha assumed they were witches. Still, she did not recognize any of them.

Apparently, at least one of the others did. “Professor McGonagall?” a voice asked and the oldest “hostess” nodded.

“Please have a seat,” the woman said. The seven young witches sat in very fancy chairs that had been arranged as a semi-circle. “To my students, I’d like to say hello again and welcome. To Miss Collins, it is a pleasure to meet you, and welcome.”

“What’s going on Professor?” a voice asked. “Where are we? Why are we here?”

“Is this school related?” another asked.

“For the benefit of Ms. Collins, who did not attend Hogwarts,” Minerva said, “until recently I was Professor Minerva McGonagall, Professor of Transfiguration and Deputy Headmistress at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I understand, Miss Collins you attended St. Andrews?”

Tabatha nodded.

“Then we were practically neighbors as your school is near Edinburgh and ours is northwest of Inverness. That being said, I retired from my position last week. Given the nature of that event, I’m sure it was in the papers.”

“Don’t get the papers at home,” a voice said.

“Hence the reason why many of you are here,” Minerva said, “at least in part. All of you are called Muggle Borns back in Britain.”

“Or worse,” a girl said.

“And it is the ‘worse’ which brings you here. Britain is no longer safe for you.”

“What’s that mean?” Tabatha asked. “You’re saying we’re no longer in Britain?”

“That is indeed what I am saying,” Minerva said. “You are aware, are you not, that the British Ministry has finally decided to admit that Voldemort is back and his Death Eaters are at large again?”

Tabatha nodded.

“While the Ministry might seem to appear to consider his a threat to the entire Wizarding World – and he is – what they have intentionally omitted in their recent announcements is that it is the Muggle Borns such as you who are at greatest risk. Voldemort and his Death Eaters consider Muggle Borns abominations and kill them for not better reason than that they exist. They did this during the last War and our government here has no reason to believe they will not resume their

predations in this one. And herein lies the problem. The British Ministry lacks the resources to protect everyone. It is our belief they will make an effort this time to protect some, but that will not include the Muggle Borns. The Aurors will not, in all likelihood, respond to such threats, particularly if the Death Eaters are active against families the Ministry considers important.”

“What government are you talking about?” Tabatha asked. She wondered if the others were thinking along similar lines or not, but figured they were being respectful to their Professor. But this witch was not her Professor.

“You are currently in the Duchy of Charenwell...”

“A Duchy? You expect a tiny country to protect us?”

“A tiny magical country,” Minerva replied. “There are around forty-thousand witches and wizards in this country. That’s more than half the population in Britain and Ireland and unlike there, there are no laws restricting the use of magic here. While we have non-magical folk, they are a minority and they all know about magic. There is no secret to hide. In Britain you are not allowed to do magic where you live for fear of the Muggles learning about it. Your magical government will not allocate assets to defend you or your families and you are not allowed to use the means to defend them yourselves. That is the current state of things.”

“Why only us?” Tabatha asked. “My younger brother’s a wizard. If my family is in danger, why is it I’m the only one here?”

“Because the risk to you is immediate,” Minerva said. “Your families will be offered evacuation to this country in the next few months. Recent actions by our government have given us time. Unfortunately, those actions were unable to keep you safe.”

“Safe from what?”

“From becoming a concubine,” Minerva said.

Tabatha could barely see the new room she was in. She had been told it was a Library and told she was to wait there, but she barely remembered that. For two hours or so that Professor McGonagall talked about what had happened to her and the others. She learned a little about magical bonds and more than she ever wanted to about the Concubine Bond. She didn't care that it had been invented with the best intentions. For hundreds of years, girls like her were ensnared by it, taken from their families, and sent to live as slaves! For the first time in five years, she wished she had never been a witch.

That Professor McGonagall had lived a respectable life for fifty-three years meant nothing. This was not the life she had wanted or even imagined possible. It didn't help that one of the seven witches – a girl named Penelope – had been one for five years. So what if she had been Head Girl at her school while being a Concubine? She was still little more than a sex toy. That Penelope girl had been bound at age 15 and had spent her weekends and holidays having sex with a much older man. A year later, that man had lost a card game and she wound up with a boy her own age who wasn't much better at first and worse later on. The boy had loaned Penelope out in exchange for political favors that would help his career in the Ministry!

Is this the kind of life she could expect from now on?

What were these people talking about? How could this even possibly be a decent life? A slave was a slave! Didn't they see that? And they must be delusional to believe that whoever did this would actual do anything to help her family. She was certain she would never see them again and felt guilty for not saying anything nice to them at breakfast that morning. Then again, it's not as if she knew this was going to happen! What kind of mad world was this?

"Tabatha?" a voice asked softly.

She wanted to yell, but did not for some reason. She opened her eyes and saw a familiar face. "Stacey?" she asked.

The young woman nodded.

“What are you doing here?” Tabatha asked. “You’re one of them, aren’t you?” she added noting that Stacey was wearing a short silk robe and slippers and apparently nothing else.

“One of them?” Stacey replied.

“Those slaves!”

“I was,” Stacey said. “I was one of those for three horrible years. As you’ve been told, the Bond can be abused and it was abused horribly in my case.”

“Th-three years! But you only disappeared a year ago and...”

“And I first came to St. Andrew’s three years ago,” Stacey nodded. “My Master sent me there. I went to school during the day and serviced him and his friends during the evenings. I was too young to keep out of school, but he sent me to St. Andrew’s so that no one would ask questions I was forbidden to answer and expect a response I could not provide.”

“And now your Master wants me too?”

“I’m no longer with him, Tabatha. I was sold for all practical purposes to pay off a debt.”

“So now you do that for someone else here? Why are you here? Why are you trying to act like my friend? Do you think I might want this? Are you trying to make me feel better about becoming a whore? Did your Master tell you to torture me like this?”

“I don’t have a Master, Tabatha.”

“So you’re no longer a concubine?”

“Not as I once was,” Stacey said. “My husband allowed our bond to mature and I knew I wanted that.”



“H-Husband?”

“The mature bond is that of a husband and wife, Tabatha; not a slave and master. The bond can result in that vile relationship. My former Master would have never let the bond mature. He had a wife and I don’t think he knows what love is or cares. I was just a thing to him, not even a person. For three years, I had no name outside of my cell or school.

“But a few days ago, I was released from that hell and brought here. Like you, I thought the same thing. This place looked nicer, but after three years on my back naked with ugly old men humping me, I really did not expect anything better. I was told that’s why I was born a Muggle Born. I was born to shag eight to ten men a day for their amusement. I never believed that, but that was the life I found myself in and the bond kept me in it.

“But this life is not that life at all. I am a person here. I am a woman here. I am a witch here. And, I am a wife here. He will offer you all of that, Tabatha. The offer stands forever. All you have to do is accept it.”

“And if I don’t?”

“He will not bother you after the Bonding. You will attend school here. But unless you let the bond mature, you can never be truly free.”

“And how are you free? You were forced into marriage...”

“I was not forced. I chose it.”

“A couple of days?”

“Unlike the Consort Bond, to move this one forward I don’t have to love him more than anything. I just have to find that I can love him, even if it’s only just a little. It will grow in time. It is growing. It’s how

the bond was meant to work and it may be better than I could have done on my own.”

“Why are you telling me this?”

“The bond began when you were sold, Tabatha. Once that happened, there’s no stopping it and it cannot be broken, only transferred. You will not be transferred. But you can have a life here. All you have to do now is be willing to accept that. All you have to do now is be willing to believe you can be happy and you will be able to live a full life as a woman, a wife, a mother. Just promise me you’ll keep your mind and heart open, even just a little. Be willing to accept this life, Tabatha. You don’t have to, but be willing to.”

“I want to hate this! I want to hate him!”

“He is not the reason you are here, Tabatha.”

“What? What do you mean? If he hadn’t ‘bought’ me I might still be at home...”

“If he hadn’t bought you, someone else would have. Believe me, Tabatha, he was your only option. The person you should hate is whoever sold you in the first place. My husband bought you to save you from a terrible fate and give you a chance at the life that would have been stolen from you otherwise. You can have almost everything here.”

“Not everything, though.”

Stacey shook her head. “You can have love, life, happiness, a family even a career here. In that regard the sky and your desires and abilities are the only limits. But after today there is one thing you will never have again.”

“What’s that?”

“Once you bond with Harry, you will never have another man again.”

“I’m not sure I want him either!”

Stacey nodded. “I guess that’s understandable. I envy you.”

“Why?”

“He will allow you to think for yourself, Tabatha. You will be able to think that if it’s true. I didn’t have that my first time. I haven’t had that until I came here. I can’t tell you if this way is better at first or not. I know it’s better for me, but after three years whoring on my back against my, that was not a real decision. Do you know where you are?”

“Charenwell, she said,” Tabatha replied.

Stacey smiled. “You’re there as well. I mean do you know where you are sitting?”

“A couch in a library. A bloody big library.”

“It’s more than that,” and Stacey explained the significance of the couch and the particular place where Tabatha was seated. “You will become part of our family, Tabatha,” she said. “It’s up to you if you want all the way in. Try and be open to the idea?”

Tabatha did not know what to say. She knew now that she and Stacey were no longer alone in the huge room. Two women from before were there, dressed now as Stacey was. There were six others women, at least two or three were younger than her. And there was a young man. She recognized him from the papers.

“You’re the Boy-Who-Lived,” she gasped.

The young man rolled his eyes.

“He hates that name,” Stacey said.

“Sorry,” Tabatha replied.

“I’m Harry Potter,” the young man said with an almost shy smile.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew’s, SP – St. Patrick’s, SD – St. David’s.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16; CONSORT (POTTER).\*
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15; CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22; CONCUBINE (BLACK).P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68; CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39; CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16; CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14; CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14; CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone Collins, age 16 (3/11/30) (SA-5). Sold at Auction 7/15/96; CONCUBINE, HOUSE OF BLACK 7/15/96.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6). Sold at Auction 7/15/96; CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/15/96.
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (7/1/82) (Gr-3). Sold at Auction 7/15/96; CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/15/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P
3. Penelope Ann Clearwater, age 20 (2/20/76) (Ra); Sold to Devon Caster (7/20/91); Won by Percy Weasley in card game (7/3/92); Sold at Auction (7/15/96); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/15/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May Spinet, age 18; CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21; CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20; CONCUBINE (FRED).\*
4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (7/10/79) (Ra-6); Sold at Auction 7/15/96; CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/15/96.
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (2/26/81) (Ra-4). Sold at Auction 7/15/96; CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/15/96.

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18; CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22; CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20; CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (5/30/79) (Hu-6). Sold at Auction 7/15/96; CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY: SETTLING IN

TUESDAY, JULY 16th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Tabatha awoke the next morning in the most comfortable and warm bed she could ever remember. It took her a few moments to remember where she was as the sleep faded and she saw the huge and elegant bedroom illuminated with sunlight. She remembered then the day before and remembered what had happened to her. Still, she was alone in the bed which was not something she was expecting after last night, which was itself hard to understand. He had told her once they had bonded – once he had taken her in front of all those women – that he would never demand that from her again. And yet she let him do that to her three more times.

She was actually hoping he'd still be in bed with her!

This was not what she had thought would happen when he first ordered her to take off her clothes. She had been terrified and feared ... Well, her worst fears did come true, didn't they? He had ... he had ... was it really rape if it was that wonderful? Okay, it probably was. She hadn't asked him to and knew the magic prevented her from saying no to him. But by the time it happened? No. By the time she first touched him? He had already made her feel so wonderful. Still, she thought, this is not what I wanted. Well, it wasn't what I wanted, until it happened and then? Why was I not more scared?

Scared? Why did I want more?

She wondered if it was the bond, but she had heard that while it stopped you from refusing and made you enjoy it – at least if that's what he wanted you to do – it did not totally shut you off. If you really were terrified or really hated it, you would be that way deep inside and remember it, she was told. Yet, those thoughts all vanished when he first kissed her. What was that about? She had kissed a boy before; one she thought she really loved and while that seemed amazing at the time, it was nothing like his first kiss, his first touch and everything that seemed to flow so naturally from that moment.

And where did he go? She thought. She didn't remember him leaving her. All she remembered were wonderful dreams. Tabatha rubbed her eyes, clearing the last vestiges of sleep away and saw a piece of paper laying where he had been sleeping. She picked it up.

Good Morning Beautiful Tabatha:

Sorry. I was hoping you'd wake up in my arms, but you were still asleep. I had to get up. I didn't want to, but I do have things that need doing. I didn't want to wake you as you looked so peaceful. Sorry.

Anyway, the bath is to your left through the door. There should be a change of clothes for you on a chair in the Dressing Room (which is between the bedroom and bath). Breakfast should be waiting for you in the Dining Room (door on your right, at end of hall turn left and keep going to the Great Room. As you enter, it's the double doors on the other side to your left.)

Most of us are busy this morning, but I know this is all new to you so I've asked Stacey and Daphne to show you around and answer any questions you have, or just talk. I'm told Stacey was your friend in School and as you are now a Black, Daphne is there as well (she's a Black too, although her sister Astoria is a Potter like Stacey.)

The rest of us will be back at lunch time (and hopefully that's not just after you get up, but if it is don't worry about it.)

I hope you don't hate me. I really want you to be a part of this wonderful life we are building here. I tried to make yesterday as wonderful as I could for you, but somehow I feel that I failed you and for that I am terribly sorry. Please don't blame yourself for anything either. It's not our fault we were born into this sick world. One day, I hope to change all that and I hope you are there with me when WE do. Until lunch, then.

With all my Love,

Harry.

It was around ten in the morning when Tabatha walked into the Dining Room. She now knew all of this was real as she remembered having dinner here last night, and of course what followed. There were two young women and one older woman seated together at the center of the huge table. One of the younger ones was Stacey and the other one she remembered was named Daphne. Tabatha did not recognize the older one.

“Good morning Tabatha,” Stacey said with a genuine smile. “Have a good night’s sleep?”

Tabatha blushed a little. “As a matter of fact and much to my surprise I did,” she said. She had done it with Harry a couple of times after they had retired, which still confused her since the closest he came to initiating it was by being in the same bed. She looked at the older woman and still could not place her. “I’m Tabatha Collins,” she said. “I don’t remember seeing you at all last night when I was...” she really did not know how to describe it.

“Raped?” the woman added. “It’s what it is in a way. Unless you were going to have him anyway, that is. I’m Cissy Mal ... Black. Cissy Black. I might live here, but I’m not a party to whatever went on last night.”

“Just as you were not a party to what your husband and his friends used to do to us?” Stacey hissed back.

“Or her son for that matter,” Daphne added.

Tabatha looked at the older woman. She was silently crying after the brief onslaught. “Are you okay?” she asked wondering what all that meant.

“S-sorry,” Cissy said. “I ... I didn’t mean it the way it ... I wish ...”

Tabatha listened as Stacey and Daphne explained all about the woman’s former Husband and son.



“Past few days have been hard for her,” Daphne said indicating Cissy. “Perhaps we shouldn’t be so hard on her as well.”

Stacey snorted. “I spent three years in hell thanks to that woman’s ex.”

“I don’t blame you,” Cissy said. “I’d hate me too, if I were you. I wish there was something I could have done. I really don’t know what I could have done, but I wish I could have done something. I knew he probably had a concubine or two...”

“Three,” Stacey said. “He always had three. He replaced us after three years. According to Verity, who was there when I got snatched, he sold us when he was done. Verity remembers he was most put out whenever a buyer insisted he wanted the girl to have her wand. The man didn’t think we deserved such luxury. I wouldn’t doubt if he complained about needing to feed us, because in his care food and a cot were all we had to ourselves. Once I took my O.W.L.s, my books, wand and clothes were taken. He said a whore doesn’t need such things.

“I used to wonder if the sick bastard was married and if so what his wife was like. Was she as vile as he was? What kind of life did she have? Did she know? If she did, what did she think? Did she not care either? Could she? The man destroyed my life and the lives of my friends because he could. No other reason for it as far as I could see. He could ruin us, rape and laugh at our misery when his friends had their way with us. I always wondered what kind of woman could marry that.”

Cissy snorted. “One like me,” she said. “My father paid him a lot of money to take me as his betrothed when I was eight or nine after my older sister did the right thing and became a Consort to another. All I was told was that I had been betrothed to him. I never even met him. The first time I ever saw him I was sixteen. It was the summer after I had taken my O.W.L.s and just the day before I was told I would marry the next day. Apparently my father paid him a lot of money to take me before I could wise up and find a Consort. I had no say in anything.”

“The more I learn about that world, the worse it seems,” Tabatha said.

“You wanted to envy me,” Cissy said to Stacey. “You probably thought if he had a wife, she’d be pampered or some such and living in luxury while you ... while you suffered as you did. In a way, I envy you that. At least you couldn’t fool yourself into believing your life with him was the way things were supposed to be. I tried to.

“Every girl dreams of her wedding and after. Of course, dreaming about the after comes later when you know about what the after means. Every girl dreams it would be perfect and wonderful. My mother encouraged that.” Cissy snorted. “Perfect and wonderful. The man barely looked at me. He danced with me once at the reception for appearances sake and then left for hours; no doubt to spend time with his concubines. He returned smelling of them and totally unashamed. He barely said a word to me or anyone else as he dragged me from the reception to his bedchamber where he told me I had two minutes to undress before he ripped my gown from me. That was the extent of his romance and foreplay with me from that point on. As soon as I was naked enough, he pushed me onto the bed and took me. When he was done, he left. It was that way every night until I was pregnant.

“Once it was confirmed that I was pregnant, he never touched me again. He might have had I given birth to a daughter, but it was a son. Not that I was all that upset about being left alone by him. He made me feel dirty and soiled. I was nothing to him. I was a Pureblood wife. My role was to look good in public, say the right things and bear his heir. Anything else, he said, was a waste of his time and talents.

“For a few years, at least I could enjoy being a mother. I did enjoy that. But he even took that away from me. When the boy was six and starting to become the kind of young man I thought could be different from his father, his father took him from me complaining that the boy had far too much feminine influence in his upbringing. Oh, I did see him. I had the privilege of watching as the kind and curious boy I had raised turned into a hate filled copy of his father over the years. In

many ways, he was even worse than his father as I found out a couple of weeks ago.

“My son is betrothed,” Cissy continued. “Unfortunately for her, she knows him, and through him any man he wants her to know. He takes her when and where he pleases and allows his friends to do the same. She complained to me about it, complained that whenever he wanted to ‘influence’ someone at school, she was his tool. I said something to my son about it and his response was to gang rape me with the help of his friends. She was there and cheered them on. Apparently, all she really wanted was someone else taking her place as the family slag.”

Cissy looked at Tabatha. “Stacey was at one end of our vaunted society back in Britain. I was at the other. There was a difference between us. But was it really a difference?”

“The Malfoys are an extreme,” Daphne said. “They are Pureblood Supremacists of the worst sort. The man is a convicted Death Eater and the son will probably take the mark as well. Not all wizards are like that...”

“That’s for certain,” Tabatha said. “Harry’s not,” she added somewhat surprised at herself.

Daphne nodded. “No, he is not at all like that.”

“I’m sorry for yelling at you,” Stacey said.

Cissy nodded. “I’m a product of the society that did what it did to you. I looked the other way all those years. I shouldn’t have. I’m sorry.”

“Is Harry the exception?” Tabatha asked.

Daphne laughed. “He definitely is an exception in so many ways. But, if you meant was Cissy’s life normal for a witch? Was Stacey’s life before she came here? No. Their life, however, is the life most witches could expect should the Pureblood Supremacists prevail, regardless of which banner they raise. My father is a pureblood. He’s

not like that at all. He loves my mother very much, and me and my sisters.”

“He sold you,” Cissy began.

“The Death Eaters and your son left him no choice really. He either sold me and Astoria to the next Lord Black, or he could watch as the rest of us were raped, tortured and killed. Fortunately, the next Lord Black turned out to be Harry. We think the bastards thought it was Cissy’s demon spawn. Astoria and I knew as soon as we found out it was Harry who would bind us to him that we had dodged a Bludger. We knew if he made a promise to us he’d try to keep it and we knew he would never be mean to us or hurt us. We both wanted to be his once we knew we could be. One might even say that our bonding was as much our desire as his decision. It certainly was wonderful.”

“It was,” Stacey and Tabatha said together. Tabatha was surprised she thought that much less said it.

“Is that the bond?” she asked. “Should I feel this way about what happened?”

“The bond doesn’t work that way,” Stacey said. “If your Bonder wants you to enjoy the sex, you will enjoy it physically. But emotionally? No. The Bond cannot make you enjoy it that way. The Bond prevents you from expressing yourself to him and to others not bonded to him except as he would allow. But between us? You can say what you really feel and it will be the truth and not the bond.”

“ I’m so confused,” Tabatha admitted. “I should have hated yesterday. I should have been disgusted at what happened. Even if I might have wanted to be with Harry – who I never had met before and I wouldn’t have done that – I should have been revolted at having my first time so public. But I wasn’t. If anything I wanted more. It shouldn’t be that way, should it?”

Daphne shrugged. “What can I say? Harry is a very nice boy. Under other circumstances, he’s perfect boyfriend material. It’s hard not to like him if you actually get to know him. He also knows how to push

your buttons to maximize your enjoyment of him, doesn't he? Basically, he's perfect man material and it's hard not to melt away with him. But, if you add to it the fact that he is without a doubt the most powerful wizard alive? We witches are drawn to powerful magic and that being the case, he's the flame to our moth like tendencies."

"Is that why that couch seemed so special too?" Tabatha asked. "I mean for me it seemed as if it was the only place where doing that was absolutely right."

Daphne shrugged. "Could be. A lot of powerful magic has happened on that spot over the past few weeks. Harry lost his virginity on that spot with Hermione. Six others have lost their virginity there as well when they bonded with him. There have been ten bondings there to date, all of them infused with at least some love, making the magic there even more powerful."

"You can feel it if you try," Cissy said. "I'm not one of Harry's – er – wives. But I've sat there and could feel something wonderful. I do envy you girls. I will never have what you have with Harry."

"Why not?" Tabatha asked. "I mean it's not like it's truly and exclusive club."

"It would have been and could be," Daphne said. "All of us are here with Harry not so much because he wishes it, but because Hermione both allows it and expects Harry to help us."

"But all of you could be bound to him," Cissy said. "I cannot. I cannot be a Consort as he has all magic will allow. I cannot be his concubine as he has no basis to claim me or bind me. I envy you that. Were I sixteen again and know then what I know now, I'd choose to be one of Harry's multitude over most any other option. I would only consider not being Harry's if I were lucky enough to have found the one true love of my life. Aside from becoming a Consort, which is far easier said than done, the best fate for a witch right now is the one you find yourselves in. I can see it in all of your faces and to be honest, I can't say I ever really saw that in the faces of any other women before. You may not have wanted this life before, but believe

me when I say whether by accident or design, you are very, very lucky women. My penance for my life before is to live here and not be a true part of here like you are.”

“What’s that mean?” Tabatha asked.

“I wasn’t there yesterday when you joined this family,” Cissy said. “I am not bonded to Harry like that, nor can I be. As such I cannot attend bondings. Harry is the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black. Through that House we share a common ancestor. My Great-grandfather was the father of his Great-Grandmother, Dorea Potter. As he is the head of my family and because I left my husband and his family, I’ve asked for and he has taken me under his protection. But as I am not otherwise bonded to him, all I can hope to have is a roof over my head, a fairly nice life and safety from those who would wish me harm. What you can have is far more than that, if you wish it to be so.”

“Surely he wouldn’t prevent you from more?” Tabatha said.

“I don’t think he would,” Cissy replied, “if that were to happen. But I can’t count on finding love. I’m thirty-three. My ‘husband’ did not allow me to continue my education beyond my O.W.L.s and was of the opinion that as we had House Elves, I had no need to learn or even practice magic so I have few skills to offer other than the ability to smile and act polite to even the most loathsome of people. I have no fortune or political connections to attract a husband. I had my shot at it and my family chose poorly.”

“So what will you do?”

“One of the things I am to do, I ‘m doing now,” Cissy said. “I’m trying to help you ladies adjust to this new life. I’m hoping to help Stacey. Whether or not I could have done something before, I owe it to her now. I want her to be proud of what she is now. I want all of you to, because you should be. Whether you agree with what our society has done to you and to many others – including me in a way – or not, you should know just how lucky your life has turned out for you. As I said, I envy you. I wish I could be in your shoes right now.

“The other thing is I’ve been asked to act as the Duke’s Private Secretary. Basically, that means I’m to supervise and arrange his calendar for his official functions and, as time goes on, to arrange such things for his Ladies as well. You are a part of the family and as such the people of this Country expect to see you out and about eventually. My job is to help decide when and where and make sure you are all up to your duties. Right know, you venture out in groups. One day, you will each need to go out on your own to represent this family and this Country. I also will be in charge of the Family side of State occasions. The Duchess has her attendants to help her and the Countess will have hers as well in time. My job is to help all of you and make sure we put our best foot forward for the world.

“Right now I admit there’s not much to do. But there will be. In fact there already has been. Two Investitures in two weeks? I looked it up. That’s never happened. And we had the Queen’s State Visit just a few days ago. We think we’ll be entertaining the Prime Minister of Britain soon, which will be another major event. So I hope to be very busy very soon.”

“We’ll be busy,” Daphne said. “My sister Astoria and I are the Duchess’s Attendants and we are to help the Duke’s Private Secretary with her job, although our focus is supposed to be on Hermione. Then again, for Cissy it will be her main job while we have other things as well.”

“Such as?” Tabatha asked.

“Same things you’ll be doing,” Daphne said. “We’ll be continuing our schooling here sometime soon. But there’s other stuff as well. Most of the others are out right now flying.”

“I’m not into brooms,” Tabatha confessed.

“Not brooms,” Stacey said. “Airplanes. Real ones! It’s blood brilliant. Daphne and I are here to show you around this morning and will be off to the Field this afternoon. The others are there now and will be

here this afternoon. I think Ginny will be helping Astoria will be showing you around later.”

“Showing me around?”

“This is a large Manor,” Daphne said. “You haven’t even seen your room yet, among other things.”

TUESDAY, JULY 16th, 1996 – Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Albus Dumbledore had slipped away from Hogwarts on June 22nd, the same day the train took the students home for the Summer Holidays. He left confident that things would continue along at a slow pace and that his little research trip could not have happened at a more opportune time. Voldemort had suffered a major setback just a week earlier and was unlikely to try anything of significance for a long while. More important, Harry had reluctantly agreed to return to his relatives for at least part of the summer. When he returned from his enforced exile, the plans for the boy would be well under way.

He had returned from his little research trip on July 10th very confused. The object he had sought, although very well protected by some very vile magical traps, had already been destroyed. This was, in a way, good news. Voldemort had made at least four of those vile things and the fact that two were now known to be destroyed meant the creature’s lives were being used up. But the news was disturbing as well. So far as he knew, only he and Voldemort knew the things even existed. Someone else, obviously, knew of them. Someone else was destroying them. Someone else knew how to kill Voldemort once and for all.

This would not do! The essence of the Greater Good meant that the demise of Voldemort and the Death Eaters needed to be controlled by those who worked towards that end; in other words by Albus Dumbledore. The Muggles would never submit to his guidance unless the salvation of their world from a Dark Wizard bent on their ultimate destruction was vested in him and his Order. Should another succeed, they would be the one the Muggles would lionize and turn to for



advice. Only Dumbledore and his Order were prepared in any way to fulfill the role destiny had placed before them. To allow another, one not versed in the Greater Good or worse a wizard from a wholly unacceptable political and philosophical background to become the recognized savior of his world was unthinkable. That road led to disaster.

Over the course of his long life, Dumbledore became convinced that mankind would destroy itself if they were allowed to continue along their path. As a young boy in the 1870's, he had seen the demon factories and the price of allowing the Muggles to develop their industry and technology. They were termites consuming whole forests and raping the land in their pursuit of wealth and comfort. He had seen the ultimate horror those industries were capable of in his forties when the Muggles waged a war the likes and horrors of which had never before been visited upon the human race. Many had called it the War to End All Wars, but that proved to be wishful thinking as millions died in vain in a war that decided little or nothing.

The next terrible Muggle War began a short twenty years after the first had ended and was far worse. But it provided Albus with his opportunity. Before that terrible war his idea of the Greater Good was just that. It was that war that started wizards and witches talking and taking notice of how dangerous a Muggle controlled world had become. He himself found added opportunity in the guise of an old friend turned rival: Gellert Grindelwald. Grindelwald was trying to conquer magical Europe using the chaos of a global, Muggle war as cover. Magical Britain stayed out of that struggle until the very end when Albus himself defeated Grindelwald, a feat which would catapult him to near absolute power.

It made him head of the International Confederation of Wizards, an organization that regulated magic throughout the world. As its head, he kept that troublesome body out of Britain altogether. He picked up several seats on the Wizengamot, enough in the end to allow him to become Chief Warlock. He also gained influence in other areas, becoming Headmaster of Hogwarts even though he was not the senior member of the faculty at the time. Those two positions gave him access to money. Most notably, it gave him control of the Concubine trade, which was a very profitable business for him and

allowed him to ensure the Muggle Borns were controlled. They were a major thorn in everyone's side as they always complained about the way things were in Magical Britain and were hardly subtle about it. But their witches were now under his control and only those few lucky ones who stumbled into a Consort Bond avoided the Auction Block and total subjugation. This control was necessary. Muggle Borns tended to be supportive of Muggle culture and might prove to be a problem should they learn that it was the destiny of the magical race to rule the non-magical world.

Still, despite his seats and titles, Dumbledore was no nearer to his goal. The magical world was too loosely controlled for his positions to equal the control needed to set up a ruling class over all. His position at Hogwarts was useful for finding young talent and molding it to his cause, but he needed more. This was particularly true as his primary political rival, Lord Potter, was very good at keeping him in check. Potter controlled far too many votes directly and through his alliances. Any laws Dumbledore needed had to meet with the Blood Traitor's approval or be so subtle as to escape notice lest it go down in defeat.

Fate seemed to smile on Dumbledore. In 1970, a Dark Wizard began to rise to power in Britain. Dumbledore considered the young man a threat, for there could only be one ruler in Britain and he was not about to move over for the usurper. Although Voldemort championed the agenda of the Pureblood Supremacists, he was even less pure in blood than Dumbledore. Tom Riddle had a borderline Squib for a mother from an inbred family and a Muggle for a father and had been raised in the Muggle World when his mother died in childbirth. Dumbledore was Pureblood, but not inbred on his father's side and his mother was a Muggle Born witch who had become his father's wife and Consort. Although Dumbledore felt his father had been weak to succumb to the seduction of a Mudblood, at least she allowed her children to be raised in the magical world and observed magical traditions.

But while Dumbledore knew Voldemort's true nature, the slippery bastard had managed to pull the wool over the eyes of the Pureblood Supremacists, gathering them to his banner and giving Dumbledore and opportunity to consolidate more power and maybe even knock the Potter block down for good. The Pureblood Supremacists did not

know the truth about Voldemort and probably would not learn it until it was too late. They were his first slaves. He would use them to enslave the rest of the world, but they would always be his slaves as well, not better than a Muggle in that regard.

Dumbledore knew that one did not need to enslave to control. In some ways he was as Dark as Riddle, but he was not the psychotic killer nor did he see slavery as the end goal. That class was reserved for the Muggle Borns as it always had been. Still, Voldemort was a threat to all and a convenient foil for Dumbledore to use to consolidate power and bring the Greater Good to reality.

Then that damnable prophecy was made. Unless one knew all the facts, in particular two facts, the prophecy could easily have meant the means for the downfall of Voldemort. His followers called him the Dark Lord and the fool was too much of a megalomaniac to know that he was no Lord nor could he ever be one. Dumbledore, however, was both more Dark than Light and as the Head of an Ancient and Noble House, a Lord in his own right. He knew the Prophecy was not about Voldemort, rather it was about him and a possible end to his hope for the Greater Good.

Still, it was but a minor inconvenience at best. That and it presented Dumbledore to kill two birds with the same stone as it were. A boy would be born at the end of July who would threaten his Greater Good. Now, while it might seem easy to kill an infant, Dumbledore was opposed to killing witches and wizards. There were too few of them. Besides, killing upset the social balance. Kill too many Purebloods and the Muggle Borns would seize control. But the boy was a threat, so it was a simple matter of determining who the boy was and then setting Voldemort after him.

Who should have been easy, but two boys were born at the end of July. One was Neville Longbottom and the other was Harry Potter. Potter was the one time Dumbledore did not curse Muggle Borns. Potter's father was a Potter through and through and did not trust Dumbledore at all. But the mother was a Muggle Born and Consort, and thus the weak link. She practically worshiped Dumbledore. He used her blind faith in him to secret the Potters in a home he owned in Godrics Hollow despite the fact that the Potters surely had a Manor

somewhere that was far safer. When the two boys were born, Dumbledore came calling. It was obvious which Boy would be his equal. So he used a Mind Charm on a low level Death Eater who had an unnatural interest in the Potter Boy's mother, telling him just enough of the Prophecy to set that lunatic after the Boy. Dumbledore was confident the sick bastard would kill the infant, thus sparing him from such dirty and unsavory work.

But the boy didn't die. That stunned everyone including Dumbledore. Dumbledore was even more surprised to find that the brat had a little sister. Damn Muggle Borns! Give them half a chance and they breed like rats. It was that night Dumbledore conceived his nearly fool proof plan, a plan that would see the end of the Potter line and one that would considerably enhance his personal wealth in time. In the confusion of those days, he learned a few things. First of all, the infant was surprisingly powerful. But a magical binding charm would take care of that. Second of all, the boy had become a Horcrux. This meant two things. Riddle was not dead, and would return and the boy's death could now be justified to the magical world. But he would let Riddle take care of that loose end.

Sirius Black was another problem. It was Dumbledore who spread a rumor amongst his followers that they had been betrayed. This was not entirely true. Peter Pettigrew was in fact a Death Eater spy, but he was so low in the Order that the Daily Prophet probably knew more about what was going on than he did. Dumbledore encouraged the rumors of a spy and deliberately made people begin to suspect Black. He needed Black out of the picture and after the murder of Black's close friends, it was easy enough to arrange. He had Black place the girl with the Muggle authorities in exchange for giving Black information as to the whereabouts of Pettigrew. Black proved so predictable and getting him tossed into Azkaban without a trial was child's play. With Black out of the picture, he also dropped hints to the Death Eaters as to the whereabouts of the Longbottoms and they proved all to predictable. Those who might challenge his actions in regards to the last scion of the Potter line were conveniently out of the picture.

There was Lord Potter, of course. But simple matter of submitting a false Will to the Wizengamot kept him somewhat out of sight and

mind. So the baby was sent to live with Muggle relatives who hated his parents and their kind with a passion. Dumbledore knew the boy would be neglected horribly and hoped he might get lucky and see the boy die before he could attend Hogwarts. But that didn't happen. Thus it was time to focus the boy on another target. The boy would be conditioned to go after Voldemort like an attack dog. Dumbledore had no illusions about the outcome. The magical bonds were still in place and the boy would receive no training, thus making certain that Riddle would kill him.

Except that failed to happen. The boy was a hard one to kill, it seemed. Since it appeared increasingly likely he might live to see his majority, Dumbledore saw the need to keep him distracted. He had made the initial plans as a contingency long ago and now all he had to do was move forward. As the boy's magical guardian, he long ago had arranged the boy to be married to the daughter of Molly Weasley, a Pureblood Supremacist in his camp. Both the boy and the little brat of a girl had proved difficult. The boy had affections for a Mudblood and everyone except them knew it and the girl had no real interest in him.

A minor difficulty, really. The real trick was keeping the boy in the dark about his true wealth and heritage. When the last Lord Potter died, the boy became eligible for emancipation upon his eleventh birthday. Had he been sorted into Slytherin, he would have known that fairly soon. But he was in Gryffindor and had been befriended by Ron Weasley who was being paid good money to make sure the Potter boy would not learn of his heritage. The Weasley whelp had the audacity to ask Dumbledore to sell the Granger girl to him as a Concubine, but as that would take her from Potter, Dumbledore had no issue. As for Potter and Ginny Weasley's relationship, a pair of powerful love potions and an empty Burrow would solve that little problem.

The plan was to "rescue" the boy from his vile relatives right after the reading of the Will of Sirius Black. He would be left alone at the Burrow with Ginny, both of them dosed up on love potions. Nature or the potions would take its course and the Weasley girl would be pregnant by the end of August which would require Harry to do the right thing and marry her. This would give Dumbledore access to the

Potter estates. Once Ginny bore a son, he would have control over the heir as well. Surely Voldemort would kill Harry in time. If not, that horcrux would justify his execution. The son would be raised and trained to rule the world as the Heir of the Greater Good. If his mother proved uncooperative, she could be dealt with as well. Her mother was more than willing to sacrifice the girl to the Greater Good.

When he returned from his trip and went to Gringotts, he had no reason to believe his plans were not moving forward. But that trip to Gringotts had been a shock on so many levels. Sirius had told him he left the estate to Malfoy, as it would not do to leave the Black heritage to a Half Blood. Dumbledore's first mistake was to believe Sirius. The problem was he detected no lie or deceit from the man at all. Had Remus said something as unbelievable as that, Dumbledore would have suspected a lie. Being a Werewolf made him immune from the mind arts. But Sirius was not immune, or so Albus had thought. Obviously he was mistaken.

The boy who had left Hogwarts less than two weeks before was not the same person who entered the conference room and destroyed the Order with a stroke of his pen. Physically, they were one and the same, but this new Harry Potter was confident and even a touch arrogant. Then again, when you can break the backs of wizarding society, you can afford a touch of arrogance. That is what the boy had done.

Under other circumstances, Dumbledore might have written it off as youthful indiscretion. But the "attacks" were too well aimed and too calculated for maximum effect. He had either grossly underestimated the boy, or the boy had some very dangerous advisors, or both. In the following days, the Order of the Phoenix all but collapsed. Remus, Tonks and three Weasley brothers disappeared. As there were no Dark Marks or bodies, Albus had to accept the fact that they had left the country, probably joining up with that rogue Harry Potter who had turned the tables on him again by taking Molly's precious daughter as his slave right there in public for all the world to see. At least the boy had the decency not to bind her to him there. Arthur Weasley left his wife that very day. She still lived at the Burrow and Dumbledore had no idea where Arthur was laying his head. Arthur had also left the Order in disgust. Molly was a broken woman. The Weasleys were

once the most revered family in the Order. That was now a thing of the past. The only Weasley still loyal to Dumbledore and of any use at all was Ron, and that was not saying much particularly as he was demanding a wench to compensate him for losing that Granger bint to Potter.

Half the Order had tendered their resignations over the last few days. True, most were lower members and were tools to be used, not future leaders in the Greater Good. But it was a blow nonetheless. The Order's ability to stand against Voldemort and his Death Eaters, which was still necessary, had been crippled in one afternoon.

The good news was Tom was in no better shape. Dumbledore had learned from his pet Death Eater that Riddle had been out of sorts for weeks. To be more precise, the man had been in a coma and few knew if he would live or die. Unfortunately, the bastard chose to live, but he had lost over half of his operation while he was indisposed and had lost over ninety percent of his finances and logistics. Basically, Tom was also out of the Dark Lord business for now, but Dumbledore knew it was only a setback, not a total defeat, so Tom would be back and probably would return mad as hell.

What made no sense to Dumbledore was the attack on the Ministry. That day he passed it off as a bluff, a poor job of extortion at best. But it seems the kid was not bluffing, or at least the Ministry was not acting as if it were a bluff. They were letting people go left and right and shutting down all but essential offices, anything to come up with the four point two million he had demanded in reparations for the girls that had been illegally sold. The Ministry expected Dumbledore to come up with the lion's share of the reparations as he had been the one to circumvent the law to sell those girls. Between the Ministry's demands and Potter's personal claims against him, Dumbledore would be broken if he paid and in prison if he did not.

Dumbledore was pleasantly surprised with his returns from this year's auction. He had earned more than ten times what he had hoped. Apparently, someone had decided to corner the market on new talent. This had driven prices through the roof across the board. Still, it was only a drop in the bucket as compared to what he would have to come up with in the next month to avoid losing everything. On top of

all of that, Minerva would have to decide to retire now. If he didn't know better, he could swear she was in with Potter in some way. On top of everything else, he needed to find her replacement as Professor of Transfiguration. But he was not too worried as he had taught that subject for decades.

Now yet another crisis had come to his attention. That Potter brat was making his ancestors look tame! Dumbledore had spent almost twenty years cultivating a relationship with the Muggle Queen having managed to force the Minister of Magic to recommend to the then Muggle Prime Minister that he be named Her Majesty's Magical Counselor. It had been the then Lord Potter for over seven hundred years and he finally managed to wrest back what had been rightfully the post of his family when Charlus Potter died.

The letter had arrived that morning.

After lengthy and enlightening consultations with His Highness the Duke of Charenwell, We are of the opinion that We have been ill advised by you. This is certainly true in light of our most recent discussions and We are of the opinion that you misled Us on matters of critical import and in such times and on such matters that We are forced to question whether you ever served our interests.

You are hereby discharged as Our Magical Counselor forthwith. You are banned from Our presence and a note has been dispatched to the Prime Minister to consider changing his contacts with your world as well. Do not attempt to reply to this note.

It was signed by the Queen. Of all the blows the Greater Good had suffered, to lose his ability to influence the Queen and her government was the greatest. Worse still was the suggestion that he had not only lost his contacts, but had cost the Ministry its contacts with the Prime Minister and that the Potter boy was now the only contact between Muggle Britain and their world. He had truly underestimated the lad.

TUESDAY, JULY 16th, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.



Tabatha was amazed at this world she had now entered. The Manor was a palace, there were no other words for it. Daphne had taken them around the Ground Floor and First Floor. While Stacey had seen much of it, she had not seen all and was still stunned at the place. They had gone out front to the lawn their Harry called the pitch and watched as the Elves were building Black and Longbottom House. Already, the frames were rising and the stone masons were at work. Tabatha was amazed at all she saw.

“I didn’t know this about him.” Daphne said at one point. “Not that it would have really mattered to me or my sister. Harry’s a great guy, period. But if you must know, his family wealth makes him one of the top five wealthiest on earth, Muggle or Magical. He’s richer than the Queen really. Could care less myself. He’d treat us right with far less and that’s all that matters really. He promised us that. He promised my family that.”

“Your family?” Tabatha asked.

Daphne nodded. “He promised my Mum and Dad he’d take care of us. He promised to keep us safe and to see to their safety too.”

“So they know about what happened to you?”

Daphne nodded. “Daddy was forced into it. Harry says he and Mum were relieved to learn he was to be our ... our wizard. I don’t think they yet know just what we are. They know we are his concubines, but not what kind. When they come, they will be pleased as punch to know we are his wives. At least they will be when we tell them.”

“And what about my family?” Tabatha asked.

“They will be told as well,” Daphne said. “All families will learn of their daughters’ new lives. All will be invited to move here to Charenwell and to remain family with their daughters.”

“All?” Tabatha and Stacey asked.

“All,” Daphne replied. “Your families are important to Harry too it seems. Should they accept this, they will move here and ... and he will keep them safe as well. He made us that promise. Every promise he makes to us and to others applies to all. Even as we speak Minerva is out to speak with your families and invite them to move here in time. This includes you, Stacey.”

“He’d do that for me?” Stacey asked.

Daphne nodded. “Wouldn’t you do that for your family?”

“But he isn’t my family,” Tabatha said.

“As strange as it may seem,” Daphne replied, “we are his family. He has a sister he barely knows and is afraid to know too well as she is happy in her life. For all practical purposes, we are his family. Harry would die to keep us safe and do anything to keep us happy. He never had that apparently. He never had a family. Now that he does ... well, he’ll do anything for us. This is why we’ll do almost anything for him. He wants us to fly in his Air Force, we’ll do it. Of course, it does help that it’s fun. He wants our help where we can be of help, we’ll do that too. We are his family and that’s what we should do.”

“So he’s going to have all this explained to my parents?” Tabatha asked.

“Maybe not all,” Daphne said. “As wonderful as my bonding was and my sister’s, I’m not sure I want Daddy knowing about those details. But yes, he wants our families to join us here in Charenwell. I would take his promise to try to the bank.”

“And what will we tell them?”

“I think that will depend on you, really,” Daphne said. “All of our circumstances are different just as our families are. Hermione is a Muggle Born like you and an only child. Her parents know she’s somewhere safe, but that’s about it - although I don’t think they’d be surprised to learn she’s with Harry and they are legally married as

they did discuss that with her parents. But the rest of this might be a shock.

“Minnie and Luna have no family left, so obviously they have no one to explain things to. Dora’s and my sister and I? Our parents already know. Dora’s already have moved here. My parents knew we were to be bonded to Harry, knew what that means and know about Hermione and at least some of the others. What they don’t know is how happy we are here. They are on an extended holiday now, but Harry will bring them here. Ginny’s family already knows. Three of her brothers live here.

“Mallory and Stacey have been missing for years. Stacey’s family hasn’t seen or heard from her in three years and Mallory’s family has not seen or heard from her in twenty-three years I think. Don’t know about Mallory for certain. There was a time when she might have reconnected, but I don’t know.

“Then there’s you, Tabatha. You’ve been gone a day. But I supposed to tell you that your parents have been contacted. We haven’t told them everything, of course, but we did tell them there was a threat to you and you’ve been placed into protective custody, which is true to an extent. Harry asked me to tell you that you should write them a letter.”

“What should I tell them?” Tabatha asked in shock.

“Harry said you can tell them whatever you want,” Daphne replied. “I’d probably leave out certain details like the bonding, but aside from that, tell them what you want.”

“I don’t want to tell them I’m a concubine.”

“Then don’t be one,” Daphne said. “We’re not. We’re his wives.”

Daphne then explained in detail the difference and how it came about for each of them. Stacey also told her that it was fairly easy to change. All she had to do was want to change and to take the bonding with Harry of her own free will.

“When did you do it?” Tabatha asked.

She was told they both had taken the bond not long after they were initially bound to Harry. So far, the longest one of Harry’s witches lasted without being love bonded to him was four days. Dora and Luna held that record. They counted Luna because Hermione had not lasted four hours before she and Harry were bonded.

“Okay, maybe more than four hours according to Hermione,” Daphne said. “They took their time bonding apparently. But she jumped him after only a couple of hours. At least they waited until after lunch.”

“Speaking about lunch,” Stacey said.

Within a few minutes the three entered the Family Dining Room and noticed that the others had arrived, along with what Tabatha was told was House Longbottom. Tabatha listened as the large group talked about flying, for that’s what they had been doing that morning.

“So what’d you think?” Daphne asked Dora.

“Bloody brilliant!” she replied. “I think there’s a Spitfire with my name on it!”

Harry was the last to enter the room. Even Tabatha could see that something appeared wrong. Harry had a grave expression on his face and a few pieces of paper in his hand as he sat down.

“What’s wrong Harry?” Hermione asked.

Harry sighed. “Got a letter from Gringotts about the evictions from the Black properties,” he said. “The Goblins confiscated a lot of stuff from the homes. Apparently the Death Eaters were stockpiling supplies and now we need to arrange shipment from Britain. Several hundred tons of stuff including potions, potions ingredients - some really rare ones as well - ward stones, basically a lot.”

“So the Death Eaters lost more than some houses,” Hermione said, “why the long face?”

He handed Hermione the papers and she looked them over.

“I should have known,” she said. She looked at Harry.

“I want a meeting with all the families,” he said. “This afternoon, if possible.”

Hermione nodded and handed the papers to Cissy who got up as soon as she finished reading and left the room.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16; CONSORT (POTTER).\*
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15; CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22; CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68; CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black Potter, age 39; CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16; CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*

7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14; CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14; CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone Collins, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17; CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P
3. Penelope Ann Clearwater, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May Spinnet, age 18; CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21; CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20; CONCUBINE (FRED).\*
4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18; CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22; CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20; CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*

4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17; CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-ONE: MORE SHOCKS

TUESDAY, JULY 16th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Tabatha followed Daphne into the large Banquette Hall on the Ground Floor of the Manor. Chairs had been arranged in a circle with one large chair that stood out from the others. Tabatha took her seat next to Daphne to the left of the large chair. Immediately to the left sat Luna, her House Consort and then her House Matron Mallory. Then there was Dora and Daphne and her. To the right of the large chair sat House Potter. Hermione sat next to the chair, followed by Minerva, Astoria, Stacey and Ginny. Tabatha knew their names, but aside from Stacey and Daphne, she had hardly begun to get to know the others.

The other families filed in. First were the Longbottoms, who took their seats alongside the Potters. The Lord Longbottom looked very young. His Consort Susan was no older really. Next to them sat two older witches named Amber and Penelope, each being his wives in all but law, meaning they were both Love Bonded Concubines, like all of Harry's save Tabatha. The Lord Longbottom (whose name was Neville) announced the new bonding stating that his newest family member had taken the bond just hours after the initial bonding the day before. Next to Penelope sat an older couple who were introduced as Frank and Alice Longbottom. They were Neville's parents, which surprised Tabatha. Then again, she had been told that the families would be here one day.

The Weasleys were the next to arrive. Tabatha was told that the three red haired young men were Ginny's older brothers. Bill and his family took their seats next to the Longbottoms. Tabatha recognized the young woman who was apparently his Consort. Daphne told her it was none other than Fleur Delacour, the Tri-wizard Champion from Beaubatons in France. Next to Fleur were Bill's two wives Mary and Samantha and then his newest Concubines who Tabatha recognized from the day before Peggy and Beth Nolan.

The family of Fred Weasley, another of Ginny's brothers was next. In addition to Fred were his Consort Alicia and wives Verity and Danielle and his new Concubines from yesterday Vicki and Rachel Peters. Then there was George Weasley. Daphne noted and Tabatha agreed



that you could not tell them apart without their women. George's Consort was Angelina and next to her were his "wives" Shelly and Ellen and his new Concubine Anna. The circle was finished when an older gentleman - at last relatively given how young most of the people were - took his seat with Cissy between him and Tabatha. She was told he was Lord Mayor Lupin and was like the Minister for Magic, although Daphne and the other Hogwarts students knew him as Professor Lupin, the best Defense teacher they ever had.

Harry arrived last with a stack of papers. He did not sit down; rather he stood in front of the large chair and looked around the room.

"I guess you are all wondering why I called you here," he said. "Basically, the Goblins have completed the eviction of the dead beat tenants in the Black properties back in Britain and had sent me a list of assets they confiscated in their raids. It would seem my no account tenants have been hoarding. The properties seemed to have been used to store things, far more than the tenants could ever need in a lifetime. The Goblins are going to ship the stuff here. We've got potions of every description and literally tons of ingredients to make more. There are some rather interesting devices I'd like the Weasleys to look at. Seems they are portable ward generators and portable ward breakers. Could be useful you know."

"I take it," Fred said, "if these things are useful..."

"You'd want more?" George finished.

"You don't mind, do you? I know it's not jokes..." Harry said.

"No problems your Dukeness," Fred said.

"Jokes are for fun, but the real profit is elsewhere," George added.

"We never saw jokes as the end all."

"Just a way to have fun and allow us to research."

“For example,” Fred said, “you ever thought about mass production?”

“Bloody brilliant it is,” George said. “Muggles got loads of ways of making things.”

“And given enough supply...”

“And the right equipment...”

“We could make any potion in large quantities...”

“With near perfection...”

“Highest quality...”

“At a fraction of the cost.”

“Could become the largest potion supply company in the world...”

“If we went in that direction.”

“Works for other things as well,” Fred said.

“Lots of other things,” George agreed.

“For a small capital investment...”

“We see a huge return!”

“We were meaning to talk to you about this, Your Dukeship,” Fred concluded.

Harry could not help but chuckle. “Fine. Whatever you want. We’ll talk in more detail later, but that’s not the real reason why I called you all here. In addition to all that, the Goblins also seized certain perishable goods which I need to deal with now.”

“What kind of goods?” Remus asked.

“Concubines,” Harry said sadly. “Thirty to be exact ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five. Ten of them are from Charenwell.”

“You want to keep them?” Alice asked.

“I’m sure as hell not going to sell them,” Harry replied. “They were all owned by Death Eaters. Talk to Stacey and some of the others about that life. I won’t risk their being sent back into that hell. So yes, I have to find a way to keep them. That and as ten of them are from here, what can I do? This country would expect me to find a way to bring them home.”

“I take it,” Alice said, “that this does not change your plans for the others? You’re bringing all of them here?”

Harry nodded. “I can’t let them suffer. But I don’t know how this will work. I asked you all here for ideas.”

“We can take a few more, Harry,” Hermione said.

“What about the numbers?” Harry asked.

“That was in a perfect world, Harry. The numbers will work in any event.”

“How many?”

“Four is preferable,” Hermione said. “I can work a decent schedule with that. Six can be done but is pushing it.”

“We can take four as well,” Susan said.

“We can?” Neville asked.

“It’ll work Neville,” Susan said with a smile. “I have faith in you and us that it will work.”

“Okay then,” Neville smiled. “We’re in for four.”

“If we’re building factories,” Fred began.

“We need the labor,” George finished.

“We’ll take four each for certain.”

“Four here as well,” Fleur said.

“Are you sure?” Bill asked.

“A little late to back out now, My Love. Besides, I know where your heart is.”

“Okay then we’re in for four,” Bill said. “Gives us sixteen, you know,” he added.

“Thanks Bill,” Harry said. “That’s twenty. Ten to go.” He added watching Alice and Frank whisper.

“We’ll take at least five,” Alice said. “I would prefer none, but five can be done.”

“Alice?” Frank asked.

“I’m forty, Frank. We lost a whole decade of our lives to that damnable curse. I can’t say I can have children anymore. But we did want more and we should have more. We did take Amber in once upon a time. I’ve been here for two weeks and have seen Harry’s family grow and work. I’ve seen our Neville too. Those girls need a proper home and we can give it to them, Frank. They deserve a life and we can give them that too. It’s the right thing to do as Harry and Neville have said over and over.”

“You’re sure?” Frank asked reluctantly.

“I know I will always be yours, Frank. I’m sure.”

“Okay then. We’ll take five.”

Tabatha watched as Harry walked over to the Lord Mayor and looked the older man in the eye.

“Five left,” Harry said.

“Harry, I can’t...”

“Why not?”

“Werewolf...”

“Is Stephanie a Were as well?”

“No, but...”

“She knows you’re one though?”

Remus nodded.

“And doesn’t care?”

“She’s Charenwellian. They know better than the Brits, Harry.”

“It’s not just that, is it?”

Remus shook his head. “Dora. She hates me for what I did.”

“Dora?” Harry asked.

Dora stood and walked over to Harry and looked at Remus.

“I find it hard to forgive what happened to me,” Dora said. “I wasn’t even thirteen! For a long, long time I blamed you for it, Remus. I blamed you for making me what I am. But it wasn’t truly your fault.

Not entirely at least. You said it yourself, you thought it was necessary. Still, there always will be a part of me that was that terrified twelve year old girl being bound in a rite I did not understand to a man almost old enough to be my father. Creeps you out on so many levels.

“That being said, you were gentle with me. I might have been less traumatized if you had explained things first, like Harry does, but I can’t say that for sure. But you were gentle and kind. You were more than a sex partner for me in the end. You taught me magic and helped me grow as a person. For that I cannot thank you enough, which is why I find what we had so weird. On the one hand I should hate you for taking my innocence away. On the other, I would never have done as well in school without your help.

“What I’m trying to say, Remus, is these girls won’t see you as the violator as I did. They will see you as the kind, caring man you really are and the great teacher as well. They can have with you what I could not. I could never have Love Bonded with you for many reasons. But they can. And I’ll be honest; they will be very lucky women if they do. I found the love of my life, Remus. Thanks to you and Cousin Sirius, I found my Harry. But just because I found Harry does not mean these women cannot find you, Remus. They will be lucky indeed and your little fury problem is not one, really. Help Harry, please?”

Remus nodded. “Fine.”

“The last five then?” Harry asked.

Remus nodded.

“Right then,” Harry said. “There are Charenwell girls who attended Prince Edwards Academy and St. David’s on the list. Two each and those are the four I will be taking. You lot pick your four or five,” he said handing the papers to Remus. “Dora?”

“Yes Harry?”

“Once they are all bound, I want a full debriefing. They’ve been with Death Eaters and their supporters as have Samantha, Mary, Stacey, Danielle and Verity. They may have information we can use going forward. I don’t know what they might know, but anything may be of use.”

Dora nodded. “We might be able to work out their Order of Battle, their bases of operations...”

“It seems I confiscated those.”

“Perhaps not all, Harry. They may have heard things about others.”

Harry nodded. “I also want any information as to where we might find the bastards. We may not be ready for all out war, but that does not mean we shouldn’t find ways to hit the odd one here or there.”

“Hit?” Frank asked.

“Kill them,” Neville said. “The only good Death Eater is a dead one. Seen too much of the live ones, if you ask me.”

Harry nodded. “This won’t be the last war. Death Eaters did vile things to innocent people just to earn their marks. If they are marked, they are guilty of capital crimes. Bearing the Mark should be a death sentence. The Brits are too concerned about preserving their sick society. I have no such concerns. No Death Eater will survive the coming war. If I can find a way to reduce their numbers before I can engage in force, so be it.”

“Some might say you’ve gone dark with that attitude,” Remus said. “Just a thought.”

Harry huffed. “Most of those who would probably think Dumbledark is their hope for the future. The man sure knows how to let others die for his cause, whatever it is. Yet he looks the other way when it comes to killing, doesn’t he? Let the Death Eater bastards take a walk after the last war, despite the fact that they were all murderers,

didn't he? Looked the other way and convinced others to do the same when the bastards claimed they were hexed into being Voldemort's followers.

"I've learned enough about loyalty oaths to know you can't be imperioused into them. The Concubine Bond is the only one that is involuntary and the last I checked, most Death Eaters were wizards. And, from what I do understand about the basic concubine bond, I can't order any of my girls to commit suicide. Voldie and Dumbledore have no problem sending their loyal followers out on a suicide mission. I can't do that! I won't order my people into a situation where there is no hope of them surviving.

"If killing the enemy makes me Dark, then I don't care. It's necessary. But I'm not like them, Remus. I don't and will not throw away lives just because they are available and deluded enough to go. I'm not like them!"

"No, Milord," Remus said. "No, you most certainly are not."

"Back to the matter at hand," Frank said. "With respect to the women, what are your plans? You bought a fair few and have started bringing them in. How does this new - er - wrinkle figure into things?"

"Meaning?" Harry asked.

"Why bringing them all in," Frank said. "I assume the girls you bought yesterday are still coming, yes?"

Harry nodded. "Unless they get lucky and bond as Consorts. But the Goblins want this inventory off their hands as it were. I need to bring them here now. My thinking is I can bring them all here and we pace their bondings out over the next four or five days. On Monday, we resume bringing the others in. By my calculations, we could still bring them all in and bond by mid August at the latest."

"And how will you achieve that?"



“I’ll bring in all thirty today. I have room here for them while they await their bondings or you can take yours with you. If we each take one a day until they’re all bonded that would mean all but two will be bonded by Friday. Might have to push off Ground School ‘til Monday, but that’s okay. My plane people tell me we’ll have another six Tiger Moths ready by then and maybe more.”

“Why all today?” Hermione asked.

“They are guests of the Goblins who confiscated them,” Harry said. “I’d like to get them into a more inviting place, don’t you think?”

“Makes sense.”

“I’ll take mine today,” Fred said. “No reason not to as far as I can see.”

George and the others nodded in agreement.

“If this is settled, I’ll summon them,” Harry said. “Someone should await them in the Conservatory.”

“I’ll go,” Minerva said.

Harry nodded and gave her a few minutes to get to where she needed to be as a silence had fallen over the group.

Minerva had just reached the Conservatory when women began materializing out of the thin air. They were all young in her eyes and all were dressed in simple robes and slippers. They were all also very confused. That was understandable.

“Ladies?” she said in a loud voice to get the attention of some thirty witches. “Ladies?” When she had their attention, she continued. “My name is Minerva,” she said by way of introduction. As none of these thirty young women had attended Hogwarts, she knew it was unlikely any knew her. “As some of you may have guessed, there has been a change in your living arrangements...”

“No kidding,” one young woman said. “I kind of figured that when the Goblins hauled me off. What happened?”

“To state it simply, your former – er – employers ...” to which most of the witches snorted “found themselves terribly in debt. Their property has been confiscated...”

“Meaning us,” another witch said. “What’s going to happen to us?”

“Please take a seat and I’ll explain,” Minerva said.

Minerva suspected that many if not most all of the young women had no real idea how they came to be what and where they were. Her experience in recent days suggested this might be the case. Stacey, for example, had no idea what had happened to her and had assumed some kind of dark magic such as the Imperious Curse was the cause of her life with Lucius Malfoy. So Minerva carefully explained the concept of magical bonds with particular emphasis on the Consort Bond and its close cousin the Concubine Bond. She made sure to emphasize the Bond’s original intent, to unite a man and woman in a mutually beneficial relationship, not unlike the Consort Bond.

“That’s not what happened to me!” a voice exclaimed. “I was a damned SLAVE! I had to do what I was told, who I was told when I was told. My Master had twelve guests for dinner and I would be the bloody dessert!” It was clear that most all of the others had similar experiences.

“It is true the Bond can all too easily be abused by the wizard,” Minerva said. “Not all of us have similar experiences, but far too many do.”

“So we can expect more of that?” another voice asked.

“No.” Minerva said. “The use of the bond to enslave and subjugate while common in Britain is illegal here. Here, the wizard is expected to allow the Bond to mature or at least not to abuse the bond or his bond mate. The Bond can only mature if both the witch and wizard

desire it to. The wizards here so desire, but they cannot make you desire it too.”

“And if we don’t allow the Bond to mature?” a voice asked.

“You can still live a decent life, but the immature bond does subordinate your free will without a similar repression on his. The law and custom prevents him from abusing his power over you, but you won’t achieve your full potential. I can’t tell you to allow the Bond to mature. I can tell you that the mature Bond is worth the apparent risk. Regardless, your days as playthings and slaves are over. But, the Bond must be maintained. You must Bond to another wizard.”

“Why?” a voice asked. “If we’re shot of the bastards, why should we risk it?”

“Two reasons,” Minerva said. “You were sold under British law. You must be bonded to a wizard within six months of the termination of your previous – er – relationship or you can be sold at Auction; where in all likelihood you would find yourself in a similar situation most likely or, for you older ones, as a domestic servant who also performs services of a sexual nature from time to time. The other reason is the magic itself. You become dependent upon the magical bond with a wizard within a very short time, even if you hated the man. Your magic now needs a bond to survive.”

“So what you’re saying is if we don’t bond we become Squibs?” a voice asked. “Small price to pay, if you ask me.”

“You would be a Squib for a short time,” Minerva nodded. “But we are talking about an eventual total loss of all of your magic.”

“You mean unless we are bonded we may die?” a voice asked.

“That is the nature of it. The mature bond does not have such a debilitating effect. In that bond, you are mated for life and cannot be sold or transferred. Should your Bond Mate die, you need never bond again. But in its immature form, the Bond leaves you dependent upon it to survive.”

“Better death than slavery,” the same voice huffed.

“Death is not an option,” Minerva said. “Your titles have already transferred to your new Bond Mates. Many of you may have the desire to flee, and yet you cannot. You will be bonded again, but this time you will not be slaves. You can choose to become wives in all respects to your Bond Mate or not. I would recommend you keep an open mind and heart, for the men who are about to become a part of your lives will be very good to you.”

“Excuse me?” a male voice asked.

“Lord Mayor Lupin?” a woman asked.

“Indeed I am,” Remus replied.

“Where are we?” she asked. “This can’t be Charenwell, can it?”

“It is indeed Miss...?”

“Marks, Sir. Tara Marks.”

“Really? Wonderful.”

“Can we ... will we be allowed to see our families again?” she asked.

“Indeed you shall, Miss Marks. Probably as soon as this coming weekend. But for now you shall be sent to your new homes. I have been asked to – er – host five of you ladies.”

“You mean you have to Bond with us?” Tara asked.

Remus nodded. “And I will make the same promises to the five young ladies who will join my family as the others will make to the rest of you. First, you will be joining my family, such as it is, and not be a slave or servant. You shall not be shared out in anyway. Basically, the Wizard you bond to in the next few days will be your last wizard,

for lack of a better expression. Should you ask, you will be allowed to Love Bond and bring your Bond with me to maturity. You will also be allowed to have children. You will be allowed to finish or continue your educations and should you desire a career, I shall support you in your endeavors. If you no longer have a wand, you shall receive another. Oh, and there will be shopping trips for clothes and the like. Finally, it is the policy of His Highness the Duke that Charenwell shall attempt to reunite all of you with your families. They will be offered the chance to move here in the near future.”

“What’s Charenwell?” a voice asked.

“We have a Duke again?” another asked. Remus spent several minutes explaining where they were and about their new Duke. For the British witches, he told them they would make every effort to move their families from Britain, but that due to the troubles, it would not be possible to travel to Britain at this time.

“Right then,” Remus said. “I have selected five of you to join my House. Four I picked because you are from here and I know your families and the fifth is from Britain. Your name was drawn out of a hat as were most of you girls to keep it fair.

“Right then! Will Amelia Carpenter, Sarah Hanson, Tara Marks, Christy Matthews and Ellie Mitchell please step forward?”

Five young women did as they were asked.

“This way, ladies,” Remus said leading them towards the front door of the Manor.

As soon as that group had left, an older couple was standing before them.

“ Good afternoon, Ladies,” the man said. “My name is Frank Longbottom and this is my Wife and Consort Alice. Five of you will be joining our family. Will Sandra Butler, Veronica Riordan, Gretchen St. James, Carol Timmerman and Marie White please step forward?”

The five young women in question rose one by one and walked over; each was surprised to be hugged by the man's wife. He told them he and his wife lived here at the Manor for now and led them to the main stair.

A younger man entered. He had red hair and a beautiful blonde woman on his arm. There were four other young women with him. "My name is Bill Weasley," he said. "This is my Wife and Consort Fleur, my wives Mary and Samantha and my other ladies Peggy and Beth, whom we hope will become my wives one day as well. We currently live in a large house on the beach. Four of you will be joining us. Let's see," he said looking at some parchment. "Carla Masterson, Christine Paulson, Lana Powell and Donna Roselle?" The four young ladies in question rose and joined the group and followed the man and his Consort out the front door.

"Right then!" another young man with red hair was there. He too had several young women with him. "I'm Fred Weasley, world renowned jokester and entrepreneur. This is my lovely Consort Alicia – and a brilliant Chaser to boot; these are my wives Verity and Danielle and my two newest lovelies Vickie and Rachel. Okay, seems four of you lot are off with us to our lodgings by the woods. The lucky winners are: Caroline Folsom, Coleen Harrington, Helen Ivey and Elisha Stout."

After that group left, another group arrived. The young man looked exactly like the one who had left and had said he was a jokester. "What?" a voice asked, "back for more?"

"Er," the young man began, "I just got here. You must be thinking about my brother Fred. I'm George and yes we're twins, although no longer identical. Our friends can now tell us apart 'cause we have different ladies. Pity. But it's not like there's loads of identical twins out there. This is my Consort Angeline who's the best Chaser I've played with. These are my other wives Shelly and Ellen and my other lady Anna. And joining us today are: Roberta Larson, Eileen O'Malley, Georgina Parker and Isabel Tate."

“Georgina?” Shelly asked looking at one of the four women who stood up.

“Shelly?” she replied, “it can’t be, can it?”

The two embraced in a tearful hug. “She’s my twin sister, George,” Shelly explained. “You knew?”

George shrugged. “I guessed it was possible. I just liked the name, to be honest.”

“Thank you,” Shelly said.

“You don’t look like twins,” George said.

“Not all of us are identical,” Shelley replied.

When the group left, only eight young women remained. A much smaller group approached. The boy was the youngest they had seen yet and there were three women with him, one young and the other two were older.

“You seem a bit young,” one of the women observed.

The boy shrugged. “I am Lord Neville Longbottom, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom. This is my Consort Susan and my wives Amber and Penelope.”

“Only three?” another asked.

“The others had a head start,” he shrugged.

“Are you older than any of your wives?” another asked.

“Nope. Younger,” he replied.

“But we have no complaints,” Amber said.

“Anyway,” Neville said, “four of you will be joining us. And yes, the other Longbottoms are my parents. We do not live in the same quarters, but we do live here for now. Right then, will Annette Harper, Amanda Kennedy, Deborah McLean and Miriam Riley please join us?”

“How old are you anyway?” one of the four girls asked as she stood up.

“I’m not the youngest,” Neville said. “The last of us was born the day after I was. I’ll be sixteen at the end of the month.”

“Sixteen?”

Neville nodded.

“And we’re not complaining,” Penelope said just before Neville led his group up the main stairs.

“Which leaves you four,” Minerva said looking at the four remaining witches.

“Is there no one for us?” one of them asked with a hint of trepidation.

“You needn’t worry,” Minerva said. “You may be the last, but I might argue you’re not the least. You four will bond with my Husband, the Duke.”

The four girls, all of whom had been raised in Charenwell, gasped. “How old is he?” one of them asked.

“He is the youngest of the wizards you’ll meet today,” Minerva said. “Lord Longbottom was correct in that. Our Harry was born July 31st, 1980 and turns sixteen at the end of the month. That being said, he also already has the largest family.”

“How large?” one asked.



“And how old are they? How old are you, if you don’t mind my asking?”

“It’s alright,” Minerva said with a chuckle. “I am the Matron of House Potter, one of the two Houses the Duke represents. I was fifty-two when Harry was born. At the time I was bound to Duke Charles so you can say he inherited me as that bonding, while not unpleasant, was not a fully mature bond. I was originally bound to Duke Charlus. I was fifteen when he bound me to him and we were together for thirty-five years. Alas, the final step in the full bond never occurred as we never had a child. I recently retired to take up a position as Director of Educational Development in the Duke’s government. I was most recently Professor of Transfiguration and Deputy Headmistress at Hogwarts.

“As for Harry’s other ladies, he has two Consorts and seven other concubines, six of whom are love bound to him. His Consort Hermione Potter was his first. She turns seventeen in September. His Consort Luna Black (which is his other House and line) turns sixteen in September. Mallory is the Black House Matron. She’s thirty-nine and a Healer here and I would not be at all surprised if she delivered at least one of you. Dora is also a member of Black House. She’s twenty-two and now is Chief of Security for the Duke and his family.

“Daphne Potter and Astoria Black are sisters. Daphne turns seventeen in the fall and Astoria turns fifteen in the fall. Ginny Potter is the youngest sister of the three Weasley gentlemen you saw earlier. She turns fifteen next month. Stacey Potter is seventeen and Tabatha Collins who bonded just yesterday is sixteen. Of all those women, only Tabatha and Astoria do not have permission to bear child. They also haven’t asked.”

“And if they ask?”

“Tabatha would be granted permission upon asking,” Minerva said. “The Duke might wait with Astoria as she has finished only three years of her magical education and will not turn fifteen for about three more months. Basically, if you’ve finished four years of education, he

will consider it. If you've taken your O.W.L.s, permission is automatic, provided you ask."

"He won't tell us to?"

"Once your bonding is over, he might ask you to do something, but he has yet to order any of us to do anything," Minerva said. "Then again, he hasn't needed to. It seems we all enjoy his – er - attentions. This is actually becoming the problem."

"How so?"

"Well, there's only one of him and as of today fourteen of us. True, being somewhat older my needs are not the same in that regard, but I do have them. The younger ladies have them. The Consorts are supposed to be working on that so that we won't feel as if we're neglected in that way. It would be so much easier if he was less ... talented in that regard given as we are not required to service those male needs."

"If he was less talented as you say," one of the girls commented, "he probably would order you to."

"Except," Minerva replied, "as all but one of us is bonded to him of our own free will either as Consort or by Love Bond, he can't order us like that. The Bonds are reciprocal. I can have a headache and he will respect that, the fact that I haven't had that issue notwithstanding."

"It sounds almost like a normal relationship," one of the young women observed.

"And what would that be?" Minerva asked rhetorically. "Normal is or should be what works for both the witch and the wizard. What's 'normal' for Harry and me is going to be different than what is normal for Harry and Hermione and normal for Harry and any other witch he is so bonded to. But yes, if by normal you mean a satisfying relationship at all meaningful levels, including physical, then yes I suppose it is almost normal. I'd further say it's probably better than

normal. Now, let's figure out who you all are before we head up and meet the Duke and the others..."

Because of the unexpected arrivals, the afternoon schedule had been changed. Tabatha followed Stacey and Daphne from the meeting and up a back staircase to the second floor, a part of the Manor she had not seen yet. She listened as the two girls talked.

"Four more?" Stacey asked.

"Seems so," Daphne sighed. "I sure hope Hermione is right."

"About what?"

"She says she's found a way to help Harry with his scheduling problems."

"Scheduling problems?"

"You've only been here a few days," Daphne said. "This is supposed to be the summer holidays. Well, I can tell you Harry's been very busy and each week is busier than the first. Even if we weren't here with him, he'd still be busy, but he does try to be with us and all and that only makes it harder for him. He has to retrain with his magic 'cause apparently it had been bound and that's not supposed to happen. He was learning magic at half his capacity and even then he was scary powerful. So obviously he has to relearn everything so he can control his power, and that takes time. He's recently learned he has a unique magical talent on top of all that and needs to learn to harness it, and that takes time. Learning about his family legacy and this Country takes time. He's started up a fair few projects that require his attention and that takes time. He's doing stuff to prepare us for a war and that takes time. We haven't even begun to talk about actually learning to fight and schooling, all of which takes time. And then there's us."

"And we fit in to this?"

Daphne nodded. "He doesn't want us to feel neglected in any way. At least he doesn't want us to feel as if he's neglecting us. And I don't mean just the sex, although that is something I don't want to give up unless I have to. He likes talking to us as well. He likes waking up with us and holding us."

"I woke up alone," Tabatha said surprised that she was disappointed.

Daphne nodded. "His bloody schedule," she said. "I can tell you he really felt bad about that."

"He left me a wonderful note," Tabatha sighed.

"Which is so like him," Daphne said. "As I said, Hermione's trying to figure a way to make this all work for him and for us. With twenty-four of us, I'm not sure how."

"And where," Tabatha said. "Is there room here for twenty-four of us?"

"For now," Daphne said. They were now in a large sitting room on the Second Floor. "This is the Second Floor and our private apartments. This room is the Guest Sitting Room, or at least it was once. We don't really use it since the First Floor is open to us as well. There's also a dining room here, but again we haven't used it. But the reason we're here is to show you to your room."

"There are sixteen guest suites on this floor, each as two bedrooms, two baths, two huge closets and a large sitting room of its own. There are eight on either side of where we are now. Half are on the west side overlooking the gardens out back and the other half are on the east side overlooking the lawn and what will be the other two new Manors."

"Two new Manors?" Tabatha asked.

Daphne nodded. "The suites are fine for now, but we occupy this floor and House Longbottom the Third Floor and ... well some of us will

have children within the year and then this arrangement won't work. One of the new Manors is for House Longbottom and the other is really an extension of this Manor and will be connected I'm told at the basement and at least the First and Second Floors. Not the Ground Floor, though. When they're done, we'll each have our own flat with several rooms which we will live in when we are not spending the night with Harry. That's the way things are now. When we have our night with Harry, we sleep in the Master's Chambers as you did last night. Otherwise, we sleep up here."

She led them down a corridor almost to the end. They came to a room with the number "14" on the door. Tabatha saw there was a sign on the door as well:

Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black  
(5/26/79)  
St. Andrew's 6th Year

Tabatha Simone Collins (BP)  
(3/11/80)  
St. Andrew's 6th Year

"Here's your new room," Daphne said.

"I'm with Stacey?" Tabatha asked.

"We decided it would be best for now," Stacey said. "We know each other after all. I was with Ginny, but the Elves moved me in here this morning."

"Why are you a Potter-Black and I'm still Tabatha Collins?"

"That'll change when you Love Bond to Harry," Daphne said.

"Oh. And the "BP" by my name?"

"Same as on your collar," Stacey said. "Let's see if the Elves got your stuff yet."

“My stuff?”

Tabatha was led through a nice living space and into a large bedroom. While it was not nearly as large as the one she woke up in that morning, it was still larger than any other she had been in her whole life. There was a huge bed, dressers, a dressing table and a writing desk arranged around the room and she was told the Elves would help her decorate it to her taste. She also noted a trunk that looked very much like hers and several boxes.

“What’s all this?” she asked.

“The elves went to your old home and gathered your things,” Daphne said. “They also spoke with your parents telling them what happened to you. Not everything, of course. But your parents know you were in danger and now you’re safe and you’ll be able to write them. Harry’s also going to try to convince your family to move here before the summer is out. Now, they might not actually move here then, but it won’t be very long afterwards.”

“He’s even trying to find my family and bring them here as well,” Stacey added.

“He’ll do that? Why?”

“You do want to see your family again, don’t you?”

“Of course I would. But how do I explain...”

“We’ve got time to figure that one out,” Stacey said.

Tabatha turned to Daphne. “And your family?”

“They’re going to move here too,” Daphne replied. “They’ll be living just down the road from here.”

“Do they know...?”

“They know my sister and I are concubines and they know that we are bound to Harry. They didn’t want that for us, but they are pleased we’re here and not somewhere else.”

“And if my family moved here (and assuming they don’t hate Harry or me or us for all this), where would they be living?”

“That I don’t know off hand,” Daphne said. “But Harry’s had me working on a project almost from when I arrived. You see, we got the List.”

“What list?”

“One of Harry’s Agents stole a copy of the Master List of all witches and wizards in Britain that’s kept in the Department of Mysteries. Don’t ask me how. I’m not even certain Harry knows. But we have it and we know where every witch and wizard lives. That doesn’t mean we can actually find them. If their property is Warded, we simply know where to send the mail.

“But, with the list we know where all Muggle Borns are and their families. So, I’ve been asked to figure out who the families of all the Concubines are. Well, not just me. My sister’s helping as well. He wants to know where they are and how many there are and all of that so he can bring them all here. My guess is he means ‘here’ as in very close by. Wouldn’t be at all surprised if we see a lot of homes going up within a mile of here soon.

“In addition to the two Manors I told you about, he’s already building three more about a mile from here on a lake for the Weasleys. My guess is after this afternoon, he’ll be building one or two more for Neville’s parents’ new family and the Lord Mayor’s. Since he already has places a half mile from here where Hermione’s parents will live and my family, my guess is he’ll build places for the lot. All of us who have families who want to move here will probably have them living nearby by Christmas if not a lot sooner. This place might actually qualify as a town of sorts by then.”

“How big a town?” Tabatha asked.

“Four hundred people at least,” Daphne said. “That doesn’t include the thirty who arrived today and their families. Could be quite a bit, really. Big enough, at any rate, to get our own primary school, especially if we all start having kids. He’ll have to think about shops, though.”

“Why?”

“Nearest shops of any type are in Potter’s Vineyard which is about nine miles away. The real shopping is down in Pottersport which is twenty miles away. It’d be nice to have at least some shops here if we have so many living here.”

Tabatha nodded not knowing what to say.

“So why don’t we get you unpacked,” Stacey offered.

SATURDAY, JULY 20th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Finally a quiet day, Harry thought, sitting in his study. Each week since he arrived here seemed even more hectic than the last one and this one went from the busiest to even busier. He wondered if it could get any more chaotic.

He knew the answer to that already. Last week was busy. He got up early every morning for magical training. That was followed by breakfast and then flight training down at the base. Actually, it was mostly ground school and the instructor had assigned homework. Not much, but it was but one more thing on his plate. He managed to fly only two times. There was barely time for more and even if there was, there were only twelve planes.

Then there were the unexpected bondings. Harry now wondered why he had not considered that possibility before. It made sense the Death Eater types would have concubines. He really should have seen it coming after the Malfoy Estate. But he didn’t and Tuesday around lunch time he learned that the fates of another thirty witches were in his hands. The decision about what to do with them was easy,



especially as ten of them were from Charenwell. He had made promises to a lot of people and intended to keep them, if he had the time. Now he had to work through the consequences of that decision.

This past week he had bonded with five witches, bringing his current total to fourteen. Tabatha had been the first, bonded the day she was purchased at the auction. He would admit it was not as pleasant as any of the others but had spoken with her a lot. He knew the reason was she had no idea what was going on really and not much time to adjust, but it had worked out in the end. He bound her to him on Monday. On Tuesday, to his surprise, she had volunteered to serve as the cross-bonder for the next Potter witch, which occurred that evening. She was surprisingly enthusiastic when the time came and Harry learned why when they had finished a complete “rebonding.” As she cuddled with him, she offered the Love Bond, which he accepted. Tabatha admitted she wanted to wait “a bit” in regards to children but told him they would be coming in time.

Tabatha had been the cross-bonder for Laura Oliver who was bonded the evening she arrived. Laura shorter than the average, at least among Harry’s Girls and had lovely blonde hair and a body that looked like it was designed to make a young man drool. She was twenty-one and from Pottersport. Laura’s family had traditionally attended Prince Edward’s Academy of magic. In 1991 during the summer following her O.W.L.s, she was sold at Auction to Terrance Flint, the father of Marcus Flint and never set foot in school again. She was used for entertainments by father and son. Laura was also bitter. She made it clear she had no intention of love bonding with a wizard unless she was sure the promises were real. She wanted to see her family.

Laura reluctantly agreed to act as cross-bonder the next day for Fiona Simpson. Fiona was a tall and willowy woman with auburn hair and piercing eyes. She might not have had the most impressive breasts, but she had legs “that went all the way up.” She was twenty-two years old and had been born and raised in Port of Darby on the other side of Charenwell. She was among the first of his country’s young women illegally ensnared when she was sold at auction at age 15 in 1989. Fortunately, her first wizard had not been a Death Eater type and she was allowed to finish her education, although she was

transferred to St. David's for her last three years. In 1992 she became the property of one of the Rosier brothers and while her time was not nearly as horrific as Stacey's had been with Malfoy, it was still the life of a sex toy. Given that life, it was understandable that she was hesitant to offer the love bond.

Fiona did agree to be the cross-bonder for Harry's next witch Rhonda Lester. She was seventeen and from Port of Darby. She had been attending St. David's and had taken her O.W.L.s in the spring of 1994. That summer, while her family was visiting London, she was summoned. She became the property of Theodore Nott, Sr. She was used strictly for his pleasure being the only one of the five Death Eater slaves in Harry's family who had not been whored out regularly; although her Master's son was known to "sneak" a shag every now and then. She love bonded to Harry the next day when she acted as cross-bonder for the final witch of that week.

Her name was Karen Green. She was nice looking and had a wonderful smile when she chose to show it. She was eighteen years old and from Charlestown where her family still lived. In 1994, she had just taken her O.W.L.s at Prince Edward's and was staying with her friend in Liverpool when she was first summoned and bound. Her binder was the father of Gregory Goyle and she was not unlike Mallory in that she was bound to be the sex tutor to the boy. She at first thought that was odd, given that the boy was probably more "experienced" than she was. He was also dumb. Had the father not used her regularly, she probably would have barely been used at all. She was love bonded before the evening was over. Harry now had no clue how that worked. What was it that "encouraged" a woman to take that step?

Harry was going to keep his promise. He had agreed to host a lunch tomorrow for the families of all of the women who had just been returned to their homeland. Now he stared at the papers that Daphne had given him that morning before setting off for Pottersport for a day of shopping with Astoria and the five new members of the family. It was the list of families for all the other witches, be they concubine or consort, Potter or Weasley or Longbottom. He had promised to bring them all here.

Daphne had her list organized by wizard and Harry was looking at his list first. He knew some of his women had no families left and according to the list two had been disowned apparently, which meant whether they knew yet or not, they too had no family. His four newest witches all were from Charenwell, thus their families were already here. But there were still twenty-three families just for his witches that would need to be relocated; they were both the parents of the women and in many cases older (or in Mallory's case younger) brothers and sisters who now had families of their own. All told, his "family" alone needed housing for twenty-three smaller families totaling eight-nine people. For Neville, it was an additional twenty-one housed for seventy-four people. Bill's family would require seventeen houses for sixty-eight people. Fred added another twenty houses and seventy-three people. George added twenty-four houses and ninety people. Frank Longbottom's new House required fifteen houses for fifty-four people. Only Remus had cut him any slack as four of his five concubines were from Charenwell. But his fifth had two families of three.

That meant all told he needed one hundred and forty houses or flats for five hundred and fourteen people, and those numbers did not include the needs of the seven harems themselves. Right now, he had five houses in use including the manor and sixteen available spread out all over the huge West Farm. His original plan was for these families to live with the other "refugees" in the still under construction city of Jamestown. Now he was not so sure if that was a good idea.

These families were different really. The only thing they truly had in common with the future residents of Jamestown was their roots in Britain and not Charenwell. But their reason for coming here was more than just the threat posed by the Purebloods. They had family here in the form of the concubines. Harry had promised to reunite those families as far as possible given the fact he could not undo the bonds. But the question was would they be reunited if they lived ten, twenty or more miles away even with magical transport? He did not think so. No, he was now considering a new course one that, if he was right, would allow the families of the concubines to relocate here sooner than planned and live practically within walking distance (albeit probably a long walk) from their sisters, aunts and daughters.

There was a knock at the door to his study and Hermione, Luna and Cissy walked in. Harry looked up from the papers.

“What’s that?” Luna asked.

“The numbers Daphne worked up,” Harry replied. “The probable numbers of houses we’ll need to bring all the girls’ families to Charenwell. Excluding Hermione’s parents and Daphne and Astoria’s family, we need at least hundred thirty-eight houses for five hundred and seven people.”

“This does not include the concubines themselves?” Hermione observed.

“No, just their parents, brothers and sisters and the like.”

“That many?”

“You’d be surprised how many of the girls have older siblings with families of their own now. I haven’t even bothered to figure out how many school aged children there are, or younger ones for that matter and none of this takes into account future children, either ours or theirs.”

“Surely Jamestown will suffice?”

Harry nodded. “That was the idea, but is it the right one? Your parents and the Greengrasses will live nearby. Surely that right should not be so limited.”

“So you want us all together?”

Harry nodded. “Neville’s family and mine will be here at the Manors. Right now the three Weasley Houses will be built on the lake and I’m thinking now I should include Remus and maybe Alice and Frank in that plan. We’re all within a mile of each other. The lands to the east to the road are all woods and I’m already building a road to the lake. I

was thinking a town or some such between the lake properties and the main entrance.”

“Does this town plan include the Charenwell ladies?” Hermione asked.

“No. I was primarily concerned with the others.”

“You should allow for them as well. True, they won’t have to move as they’re already here, but they might want to anyway.”

Harry sighed. “I’ll ask Daphne to check those numbers as well. So, not that I can’t use the interruption, to what do I owe the pleasure of your company?”

“Well,” Hermione said, “as most of the others are out and about, we decided now’s a good time to look at your scheduling problems.”

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew’s, SP – St. Patrick’s, SD – St. David’s.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*

2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*

3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P

4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P

5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa Oliver, age 21 (4/12/75) (PE-5); Sold at Auction to Terrance Flint (7/16/91); CONCUBINE HOUSE OF POTTER (7/17/96).
12. Fiona Michelle Simpson, age 22 (8/20/73) (SD); Sold at Auction to Cuthbert Shaw (7/17/89); sold to Horace Rosier (3/12/92); CONCUBINE HOUSE OF BLACK (7/16/96).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (5/29/79) (SD-5); Sold at Auction to Theodore Nott, Sr. (7/18/94); CONCUBINE HOUSE OF POTTER (7/18/96).
14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (1/9/78) (PE-5); Sold at Auction to Harken Goyle (7/22/94); CONCUBINE HOUSE OF BLACK (7/19/96).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
6. Lana Catherine Powell, age 22 (6/19/74) (SA); Sold at Auction to Albert Runcorn (7/23/90); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/16/96.

7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (1/27/76) (PE-5) Sold at Auction to Marcus Flint (7/17/93); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/17/96.
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (3/7/77) (SG-5); Sold at Auction to Walden McNair (7/16/92); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/18/96).
9. Christine Celine Paulson, age 17 (7/2/79) (PE-5); Sold at Auction to Argus Selwyn (7/15/95); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/19/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
4. Annette Lucille Harper, age 24 (7/15/72) (SD); Sold at Auction to Cuthbert Bulstrode (7/15/87); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/16/96.
5. Deborah Leigh McLean, age 20 (10/22/75) (SA); Sold at Auction to Caratacus Burke (7/16/91); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/17/96.
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (4/2/78) (SG-5); Sold at Auction to Hargove Mulciber (7/17/94); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/18/96.
7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (9/30/79) (SP-5); Sold at Auction to Vincent Crabbe Sr. (7/23/95); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/19/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*
4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
6. Coleen Harrington, age 23 (4/21/73) (SP); Sold at Auction to Rudolf Yaxley (7/17/89); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/16/96.
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (3/3/75) (SD); Sold at Auction to Theobald Carstons (7/16/91); Sold to Harfang Rosier (7/17/94); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/17/96.

8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (10/23/75) (SG-5); Sold at Auction to Terrance Urkans (7/17/91); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/18/96.
9. Caroline Folsom, age 18 (6/11/78) (SD-5); Sold at Auction to Walden McNair (7/17/94); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/19/96.

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SD); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (12/14/70) (PE); Sold at Auction to Albert Runcorn (7/16/86); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/16/96.
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (2/11/74) (SG); Sold at Auction to Severus Snape (7/21/90); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/16/96.
7. Eileen O'Malley, age 21 (11/17/74) (SP-5); Sold at Auction to Amecus Carrow (7/17/91); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/18/96.
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (7/12/77) (SA); Sold at Auction to Thurston Jarvis (7/22/93); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/19/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36 (10/31/59).

1. Sarah Michelle Hanson, age 21 (7/13/75) (SG); Sold at Auction to Carl Borgin (7/19/91); CONCUBINE REMUS (7/17/96).
2. Amelia Renee Carpenter, age 21 (5/19/75) (SG); Sold at Auction to Severus Snape (7/22/91); CONCUBINE (REMUS) 7/17/96.
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (11/28/75) (SG-5); Sold at Auction to Victor Selwyn (7/21/92); CONCUBINE (REMUS) 7/18/96.
4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (4/4/77) (SG); Sold at Auction to Delmer Custus (7/16/93); CONCUBINE (REMUS) 7/19/96.
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (10/14/77) (PE-5); Sold at Auction to Walden McNair (7/17/94); CONCUBINE (REMUS) 7/20/96.

Frank Longbottom, age 41 (12/2/55).

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (3/22/56) (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK LONGBOTTOM) 7/2/72.



2. Sandra Ellen Butler, age 24 (8/23/72) (SP); Sold at Auction to Iago Terrance (7/21/88); Sold to Caratacus Rookwood (4/12/91); CONCUBINE (FRANK) 7/16/96.
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (1/19/73) (SP); Sold at Auction to Thurston Rosier (7/21/89); CONCUBINE (FRANK) 7/17/96.
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (5/5/75) (PE); Sold at Auction to Herbert Diggory (7/19/91); Sold to Rastaban Lestrangle (9/21/95); CONCUBINE (FRANK) 7/18/96.
5. Marie White, age 19 (6/21/77) (SD); Sold at Auction to Caratacus Rookwood (7/16/93); CONCUBINE (FRANK) 7/19/96.
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (10/1/78) (SD-5); Sold at Auction to Marcus Flint (7/17/95); CONCUBINE (FRANK) 7/20/96.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-TWO: SCHEDULES

SATURDAY, JULY 20th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry looked at the three woman seated in front of him. In the span of a minute he was being asked to change focus from the plans for the families of over one hundred Consorts and Concubines to his scheduling issues, an even more massive headache.

“I see,” he said. “And you have a solution to this?”

Hermione nodded. She handed him a large, polished wood box. He opened it and saw an hourglass lying on a silk like cushion.

“Don’t you think a watch is more effective?” he asked with some confusion. “What good is an hourglass?”

“That’s not an hourglass, Harry,” Hermione said with a smirk.

“Then what is it? Is it magical?”

Hermione nodded. “And it is something you have used before.”

“A time turner? But you said those are dangerous if misused!”

“It is your family’s time turner, Harry,” Hermione said.

“There was a time when powerful Houses had their own time turners,” Cissy continued. “The British Ministry confiscated most of them a few hundred years ago when a group of Dark Wizards got their hands on some and started causing trouble.”

“But,” Hermione said, “as Charenwell is outside their jurisdiction, your family’s Time Turner was never taken.”

“But you said they shouldn’t be used,” Harry said looking at Hermione.

“Harry,” Hermione replied looking at him in a way she had before when scolding him about homework, “do you honestly think I would have been allowed to use one just to attend class if they were really dangerous? The risk is not in the use, it’s in the abuse.”

“It’s why so much magic is regulated in Britain,” Cissy added. “Apparition and portkeys are useful, but they can also be used for nefarious purposes. The same is true of animagus forms and any other magic that could aid the would-be criminal or subversives. Were magic not controlled, it is doubtful our current government would have survived as long as it has given that it seems to go out of its way to alienate if not enrage the vast majority of the people it governs. It’s also why it controls the press to the degree it does.”

“But Hermione, you said that if I had done what I wanted I might have ruined everything!” Harry protested. “I’d go crazy if I saw myself or something.”

“Harry,” Hermione said, “at the time the only person in Hagrid’s Hut who knew about time turners was me. You would not have known what to make of you coming in and catching or killing Pettigrew ‘cause the ‘you’ in the Hut both didn’t know the rat was the real betrayer of your parents nor that one could go back in time.

“I occasionally ran into me that year, Harry. It was not a problem really as both of me knew about the time turner. Now, I’m not saying you should have a heart to heart with yourself or something. That would be...”

“Weird,” Harry finished.

“But as we all would know about this and so would you, seeing two of you would not be a big deal, especially given the reason you will be using this.”

“Okay. So I won’t go ‘round the twist...”

“And neither will we,” Luna added.

“I’m listening,” Harry said.

“First of all, I am not going to recommend its use every day of the week. I’m thinking that you will not use it on Saturdays or Sundays unless it is absolutely necessary for some reason. That being said, this Time Turner is not like the one I had. It only has – er – one setting. It will take you back exactly twenty-four hours; no more and no less.

“So, on a typical Sunday night you will sleep in your Chambers with two of your ladies. Monday morning, you will get up and go about your day. You will dine in the family dining room. That night – for now – you would retire to the Mistress’s Bedchambers with two of your ladies. The next morning, after your bedmates leave for breakfast, you will use your Time Turner and go back a day, so that when you sit down for breakfast, it will be Monday again. This time, you’ll eat in the Second Floor Dining Room and then go about your second Monday. That night, you will sleep with two more of your ladies in one of the empty Second Floor suites for now. The next morning, you turn time again and eat breakfast on the Ground floor before repeating Monday one more time. That night, you sleep in your Master’s Bedchambers again and this time you don’t repeat Monday, but begin Tuesday.”

“Confusing,” Harry said.

“We’ll have a schedule for you to keep it all straight,” Cissy said.

“Okay, and what do I do with these days?”

“One day will be for your Duke and Head of House duties,” Cissy said. “The other day will be for training. For now that will be both magical and physical training. The third day will be for your flying school, although when magical school starts up, it will be for that. Now when magical school starts, we hope your magical training needs will be less time consuming so that all your military training will occur on the training day.”

“Each of us will help you with each of the day’s schedules and make sure you don’t get – er – lost and confused,” Hermione said. “Cissy is in charge of your Duke schedule and will be your primary assistant on those days. Luna will handle your training days and I will handle your school days, naturally.”

“Naturally,” Harry said. “That takes care of my projects schedule, but what about you?”

“It helps that too, Harry,” Hermione said. “Remember how I said you sleep in different bedrooms?”

Harry nodded.

“On Monday through Friday nights, when you sleep in the Master’s Bedchamber, you sleep with me and another witch.”

“When you’re sleeping in the Mistress’s Bedchamber,” Luna said, “it will be with me and another witch.”

“And the second floor bedroom,” Hermione continued, “it will be either two witches, the birthday girl or for now the most recent addition to your harem on her bonding night. Luna and I will work out the sleeping schedules. Under this schedule – and assuming no birthday girls – you will sleep with all your ladies at least one a week. Also, each day will have three designated ‘Harry Times’ for the others. Since you now have plenty of time probably, you can afford it. During those times, you are allowed to have fun with two ladies who would not be sharing your bed that night. This means, assuming we take advantage of the schedule, you can have your way with all of us every week day and still have time for everything else.”

“We’ll work out the details for that bit,” Luna said. “Our thinking now is one day’s girls will have their Harry time in the Library, another group in the Great Room and the third group in the Second Floor Sitting Room. They, of course, are not required to have their Harry time, but if they beg out, there’s always tomorrow for them and, fair bet, a willing replacement.”

"I'm confused," Harry said. "I can see how it's possible to be with all my girls in one day that way, but your numbers don't add up for the nights. I'm with you two and four others every night during the week. That's twenty-two. I assume the other two are on the weekend?"

"Sunday night," Hermione said.

"And what about you two?"

"We can go a day without you in our bed," Luna said. "Besides, Hermione and I get you all to ourselves every Saturday night."

"Unless that's a birthday," Hermione added, "Then we get our weekend Harry time the next day."

"We know you like having us together," Luna purred.

Is it that obvious, Harry thought to himself? "What if something happens?"

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"Like at the end of Third Year," Harry replied, "what if something happens that I really need to or want to change?"

"We'll have time to talk about it," Hermione said.

"How so?"

"Because, although it will mostly be just you playing with time the Time Turner can affect more than one person. Should something happen, we can go back, figure out if it needs to be fixed and then go back again and fix it. Hopefully nothing like that will occur, but we did think about it."

Harry nodded. "Hopefully," he agreed. "So when do you want to start this?"

“Is Monday too soon?” Luna asked.

Harry shrugged. “I asked for help with the scheduling. If you think Monday is when we should get going, then I guess Monday’s fine. Why Monday?”

“You think you can do all you’re doing and have time for more bondings?” Cissy asked. “You barely had time for anything other than flying this past week.”

“And you have three next week,” Hermione said. “Katie Bell is due in Monday. Connie Plumber is scheduled for Wednesday and the Patils on Friday.”

“And we can guess you’ll want plenty of time for them,” Luna giggled.

“I suppose,” Harry said rolling his eyes. On the surface, his lifestyle might seem like a teenage boy’s dream come true. The reality was it was almost a nightmare. It would be so easy if he didn’t care at all about them, but he was not that way. This would help them almost as much as it helped him. Who knows? Maybe he could convince them to allow five Time Turned days for every “normal” day. That would allow him to sleep with every one of his witches every night. But he supposed the problem with that was what to do with the extra three days. Oh well. “Okay, fine then.”

“So, can we now talk about your schedule for next week?” Cissy asked.

“Might as well,” Harry sighed.

“Later today,” Hermione said, “if it’s okay with you, we think we should have a meeting of your key people. We need to speak with our people in Britain and find out what’s happening. You really haven’t had time to do that this past week.”

Harry nodded. He asked for help with his schedule. One should be careful with what one asks for as you might get it.

“Tomorrow,” Luna said, “we suggest a luncheon or something similar here at the Manor. Nothing too fancy.”

“For what?”

“For the families of the Charenwell girls who have returned,” Hermione said.

Harry nodded. “On one condition,” he said, “this is on a not to interfere with my weekly Brunch at Martha’s basis.”

“We wouldn’t dream of that, Harry,” Luna said. “Now, aside from the families, is there anyone else you would want to invite?”

“Neville and...”

“We included those in the families, Harry,” Hermione said.

“Er...”

“What about your sister, Harry? She is family, you know.”

“And,” Luna said, “aside from two balls you really have seen little of her. Don’t you like her?”

“It’s not that,” Harry sighed. “I just don’t want her to think I’m trying to take her away from her family.”

“That’s no reason to ignore her altogether, Harry,” Hermione said in an almost scolding tone.

“Fine,” Harry surrendered.

“And now that you have time, we may need to schedule her in as well...”

“SHE’S MY SISTER!”



“We didn’t mean that way, Harry,” Luna said. “We meant like for lunch and stuff so you can begin to become her brother.”

“Oh. Okay. And if it’s family, we probably should invite Cousin Samantha and her family as well.”

“What about your other Cousin?” Luna asked. “You two seemed to get along.”

“Dudley?” Harry asked. “Okay fine, but not his parents!”

Luna shrugged.

“The Lord Mayor has asked if Thursday is good for you for a meeting with the British Prime Minister and his people,” Cissy added.

“Is it?”

Cissy nodded. “We’ll need to arrange a schedule for the visit. I’d recommend a lunch here and maybe talks at the airfield...”

“Why there?”

“You’re looking for military aid,” Hermione said. “It would show you’re serious, especially if we have flight training at the time.”

Harry nodded. So much for a relaxing Saturday.

SATURDAY, JULY 20th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell.

Vernon Dursley might have been one of the most narrow minded, self obsessed and bigoted examples of a higher primate, but he did understand some things. Most critically, he understood the need for and income and realized that if he stuck to his guns, he would lose his job and be stuck in a country full of freaks. He found his way to work on Friday. Actually, he swallowed his pride and asked his neighbor and Production Manager Andre Wilson. Not that he could have gone to work sooner as his car was not delivered until Thursday

afternoon. Work was in a trailer at a construction site some twenty-five miles from where he now lived. He would have grumbled about that, except he was no further away from Grunnings here than he had been in Britain. Actually he was closer to work. And the traffic here was practically non-existent compared to Britain so he was only half an hour away.

Vernon had to admit he was impressed. If what his production manager had said was correct, a month ago there was nothing where his future plant was located; nothing except for a lonely stretch of road along the coast. Now, while it was obvious nothing was finished, there were steel frames going up along a wide, five lane road along the coast and his own plant was both huge and framed out. Wilson explained the speed of construction was because of magic, a word Vernon knew he would have to get used to here. The steel was fastened together the same way as it was back in non-magical Britain, but magic eliminated the need for time consuming cranes. When the ironworkers were ready for another steel beam, it was there in place in seconds. Vernon did his best not to notice that it seemed most of the workers were short and had pointed ears.

The factory building itself might well be done by mid August, much sooner than it could have been built back home and Vernon was pleased to learn he did not have to worry about labor strikes by the construction workers. To his dismay he learned that there were labor unions in this Country, but oddly there had been few strikes at all. He was a little put out to learn that Andre's estimate as to when they would be up and running was accurate. The labor would be mostly imported from Britain and given the immigration restrictions that would take time. Even then, the labor could not begin to relocate until the housing was available, and it was obviously still under construction. But the real delay was that magic could not speed up the manufacture and delivery of the equipment as that was still done non-magically and overseas. The best guess is they would be making bullets and such by November.

Vernon was in the living room going through mounds of paper that now demanded his attention when the phone rang. Petunia was out shopping for food and Dudley was just plain out. Vernon was convinced that witch he called a girlfriend had done some kind of vile

hocus pocus on the boy, but was not about to say anything given that it was now clear if he pushed, he or his wife or both of them would be out on the street. It turned out the flat really was in the boy's name and, as it was owned by the Duke himself, the fact Dudley was only sixteen was not important.

"Dursley residence," Vernon growled into the phone.

"Good morning Mr. Dursley," a woman's voice replied. "My name is Cissy Black, Personal Secretary to His Highness Duke Harry the First. Is Mr. Dudley Dursley available?"

"No he isn't," Vernon growled back. "He's out."

"I see," the voice replied slowly. It sounded very aristocratic. "Would you please inform Mr. Dudley Dursley that his presence is requested at a luncheon tomorrow at one o'clock here at the Manor? Casual attire and he may bring his date."

"And just how will he attend? I'm not about to drive him goodness knows where!"

"I am sorry to hear that, but it would not have been necessary. A car will be sent to bring him here. It will await Mr. Dursley either at your flat or at Miss Jasper's. His Highness is looking forward to it and hopes you are settling in well."

"We were kidnapped!" Vernon shot back. "That little bastard had us taken, and you expect us to sit back and enjoy it? I should sue the lot of you."

"I am sorry to hear of that, Sir," the voice replied sounding bored, "but your reaction was not unanticipated. First of all, your transfer here was perfectly routine. You are well aware of your company's position on such things. Second of all, you are hardly being held prisoner..."

"Can't go home, can we?"

“You know your company would not welcome a failure back with open arms. You are well compensated, Mr. Dursley. And as for law suits, there has been a review and audit of His Highness’s Accounts. It seems you received ten thousand a year for his upkeep when he lived with your family. He would be well within his rights to demand you account for each and every penny you received from November 1st, 1981 through June 22nd, 1996 and repay any and all amounts that were not used for his immediate benefit. Good day.”

She hung up before Vernon could even begin to shout at her about freaks and anything else he could think of.

SATURDAY, JULY 20th, 1996 - The Burrow, Ottery St. Catchpole, Devon, U.K.

Ron Weasley came down the stairs bored out of his mind. The week following the reading of the will had left him with just his Mum. His dad had left them, not that it bothered him in the least as it proved that the man was not a Dumbledore supporter and thus of questionable value. But the man had said Ron would be rewarded this summer for his efforts with befriending Harry Potter. True, he thought, that Granger bitch was beyond him now, but Dumbledore had promised him a wench and Hermione was just one. The Old Man promised and as far as Ron was concerned the old bat had broken the promise. Where was his slag? She was promised and yet she was not there. No wonder people were now starting to ignore the old man.

Ron sat down at the table and waited for his breakfast. He had to admit things were incredibly boring this summer. He was the only one of the kids in his family still at home. Bill had moved out years ago, but returned with that French hottie around Christmas. He moved out again about two weeks ago and Molly believed he and his French tart had left the country altogether. Charlie had not been home much at all since finishing Hogwarts in 1991. Percy had sent his Mum a letter not long after the reading of the Will, but he still lived in London. It seemed he was trying to get in his Mother’s good books now that Arthur had left. Fred and George had disappeared as well. It was believed they had left the country. And Ginny was dumb enough to

get caught with a love potion and was now Potter's little sex slave in all probability. Ron didn't believe the conniving little slut knew nothing about the potions.

His mother served him breakfast and he ate slowly for him. It was odd how quiet the house was. But, aside from maybe Charlie, the rest of his family had abandoned them. Bunch of traitors, Ron thought. Everyone he knew it seemed was a traitor. Harry had betrayed him in so many ways, not in the least of which by somehow taking Hermione from him. The bastard knew Hermione was supposed to be Ron's play thing, but he had taken her anyway, probably because he could and could use the bint to rub his Boy-Who-Lived stuff in Ron's nose yet again. The bastard had three other women! Why did he need Hermione as well? Okay, two of them were Slytherin skanks, so they didn't count and why anyone would want Looney Lovegood was beyond him.

Then again, Potter was getting laid in all probability and Ron Weasley, who was supposed to have his own piece of tail to pleasure him whenever he felt the need, was still left with just his imagination. Dumbledore had promised him a whore of his own. But the man seemed to be quite untrustworthy. His mother blamed the old man for ruining her family. There was something to that. Dumbledore's plans had failed quite spectacularly and had Ron not been hoping for Granger as his pet, he might have found the old man's recent troubles funny.

He had heard things weren't going well for Dumbledore. There was an article in the Daily Prophet that said Dumbledore had lost his position as Chief Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards. It said the only reason he was still Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot was because of some kind of quorum thing which meant the Wizengamot couldn't vote on anything. This was good news for the Minister for Magic, as it also meant that despite the fact everyone wanted him out of office, the Wizengamot could not force him to leave. Naturally, Fudge was back to his old tricks of blaming everything on Dumbledore. His most recent rant accused the old man of harboring a fugitive and losing control of Harry Potter. Ron smirked remembering that article.

The Prophet was also back to its old standby of accusing Potter of all sorts of things most notably the brutal rape and victimization of Ron's sister. To read that paper one would have thought Ginny was an innocent girl, something Ron's Mum believed but Ron was certain she had lost her innocence some time ago. Dean had bragged about all the "fun" he had with Ginny. Unless Dean was lying, which Ron had no reason to believe he was, Ginny was insatiable, whatever that meant. Michael Corner also had been known to tell all about Ginny and had almost been beaten senseless for describing her naked body when Ron could hear. As much as a part of him hated what Harry did to his sister, Ron did not believe she was even close to being a virgin when Harry claimed her. She wasn't much better than a concubine to begin with, he thought. Of course, he could never tell his Mum that.

As was typical practically since his father moved out, his Mum pretty much left him alone at the Burrow as soon as she finished with breakfast. Ron didn't mind and was pleased she wasn't around to nag him about homework or chores. No sooner then she had left and an owl arrived with a letter. Ron could see it was for him and was from Dumbledore. He grudgingly gave the owl a knut for its trouble, and the damned bird had the audacity to seem insulted before flying off.

He opened the envelope and there were three pieces of parchment inside. The first was a letter from Dumbledore.

Dear Mr. Ronald Weasley:

I apologize for the delay in getting these to you, but as you can imagine I have been fairly busy this summer. Enclosed is title to a witch as promised. I regret Ms. Granger was unavailable for sale as she had already been bound by the time of the Auction. I also regret the witch in question is a little older than you might have liked, but the young witches were far too expensive this year, selling for at least 2000 Galleons, so you can see this was the best I could do.

To claim her as yours, all you need do is touch your wand to the seal on her title. This will bring her to you, but will not bind her to you. To do that, state the following:

“ I, Ron Bilius Weasley, by virtue of a valid Purchase and Assignment, claim you Martha Hillary Graham as my Concubine in mind, body, heart, soul and magic from this day forward, to do as I please, until death or sale shall separate you from my House.”

You then order her to take off all her clothes and then you have your way with her. But to complete the bond, she must perform oral sex on you and you must have intercourse with her. Now, you should be advised that under our law she is your responsibility. You are required to see that she is fed properly and that she has decent clothes to wear in public. I set up an account in your name with about 2000 Galleons to see to her needs for the foreseeable future. Also enclosed is title to 17B High Street Hogsmeade where she may reside during the school year. You should know that having a concubine allows you to leave the school to enjoy her company whenever you wish, but you are still expected to attend classes and do your course assignments.

Enjoy!

Ron looked at the next parchment which stated it was Title to Martha Hillary Graham, born June 21st, 1975 and that she had been a concubine since July 1991 and was said to be talented in the sexual arts, which got Ron's heart going. Okay, so she was a little old, so what? He went up to his bedroom and looked through the mess for the package he had bought during the Christmas holidays when he thought he would be getting Hermione. He really wanted that bossy bitch to wear it, but it really didn't matter, did it? He soon found the dog collar and leash, perfect for leading his pliant little slut around. He then dropped his trousers, touched his wand to the parchment and waited.

SATURDAY, JULY 20th, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

The much delayed meeting of Harry's Order gathered in the large banquet room on the Ground Floor. With the additions over the weeks, to include the thirty-nine concubines who had been bound to Harry or the others since the last meeting, the group had outgrown the Family Dining Room.

Harry began the meeting by telling the others all that he had done since the last meeting, which was before the Will Reading. In addition to summarizing his actions at the Will Reading, he also discussed the confiscated witches they had recently added. He also mentioned the auction, but would allow Dora to answer any questions in that regard. He discussed at length both the Charenwell Air Force and his meeting with the Queen. Finally, he discussed his new plans for a town near the Manor for the families of the concubines.

“So as you can see,” Harry summed up, “and despite rumors to the contrary, I have been fairly busy since we last met beginning what we need to do here to prepare for war.”

“An’ here we thought you’re just too busy with the ladies,” Mad-eye said. “I do hope you’re not neglecting them too much.”

“A schedule is being worked out in that regard,” Harry said, “and that’s all I’m going to say about that.”

“Not even how many of ‘em are preggers?” Mad-eye asked.

“Three of my ladies are, if you must know,” Harry said. “Mallory is expecting a son. We hope to know what Minnie is having this week and we learned Dora’s expecting as well in my family. Neville’s Consort and his Amber are also expecting, as is Fleur, Fred’s concubine Verity and George’s Consort Angelina. I wouldn’t be surprised if more join their ranks when Mallory conducts her test on Monday.

“However, as amusing as my life has become, what I have been sorely lacking since I left Gringotts London over a week ago is news about what’s happening in Magical Britain.”

“Stirred up a hornet’s nest, you did,” Mad-eye said. “Dumbledore’s fit to be tied, he is. He was ousted from his post with the I.C.W. last week. Coming on the heels of getting the sack as Her Majesty’s Magical Counselor and he’s one pissed of wizard, to say the least. I wouldn’t recommend any of you lot setting foot back in Britain for the time being.”



“Have no intention of doing so,” Harry said.

“On the down side,” Mad-eye continued, “it looks like Dumbledore will retain his position as Chief Warlock.”

“Why?”

“’ Cause the Wizengamot can’t do anything,” Mad-eye said. “Can’t even oust that good for nothing Fudge. Seems almost half of the votes have vanished.”

“What do you mean vanished?” Harry asked.

“You and Lord and Lady Longbottom control close to half of all the votes. The three of you are too young to be seated and none of you have assigned a proxy. Consequently, even if everyone else shows up, there is no quorum. Without a quorum, the morons can’t even open a session, much less oust Dumbledore or Fudge or legislate their way out of the mess you’ve caused.”

“Do you think we should assign proxies?” Harry asked.

“No bloody way,” Mad-eye replied. “Whoever exercises those votes will have a bloody huge target on them. If Dumbledore doesn’t move against them, a fair bet the Death Eaters will. That lot’s pissed off as well.”

“Guess they’re rather pissed as well,” Harry chuckled.

“They lost ninety percent of everything they had,” Mad-eye said. “Even that pet of Dumbledore’s Snape got clobbered.”

“I even have one of his old Concubines,” Remus said.

“And I am much better off, thank you very much,” a witch named Amelia Carpenter said.

“That makes two of us,” Georgina Parker said. She was the fraternal twin of Shelly Parker and they were both now bound to George Weasley.

“I wonder what that greasy git would do if he knew his women were now bound to two people he hates,” Harry said.

“If we’re lucky, he might have a stroke and we’d be done with him,” Remus said.

“Why would Snape have concubines?” Hermione asked. “The man’s shagging just about every female student in his House!”

“Because he can,” Daphne offered.

“And because he can’t shag us over the Hols,” Astoria added.

“Not to mention it seems to be their way of entertaining important guests,” Stacey added angrily. “Should have snuffed the lot of them, if you ask me.”

“It will probably come to that in the end,” Harry said. “The Death Eaters are beyond redemption as Snape’s treatment of the witches in his House bears out. And until they are gone, the rest of our world is not safe. Still, the useless bastard has some uses.”

“As what?” Georgina asked.

“He’s a spy for Dumbledore,” Kingsley said, “and Moody and I a privy to his information, so arguably he’s a spy for us in a way.”

“Without baggage,” Harry said. “We’re under no obligation to keep him safe. Dumbledore probably is for some reason.”

“As nasty as he is,” Kingsley said, “he still provides valuable information about Voldemort and the Death Eaters. It was from him that we recently learned Voldemort had been in a coma since June the twenty-third and only recently recovered somewhat.”

“So he didn’t order the attacks on the Ministry Six?” Susan Longbottom asked.

“He ordered them,” Kingsley said. “He just was out of it when they happened. Although it is doubtful he would have been involved in those attacks. It’s not his style. None of the targets were high enough on his list as it were. Arguably, only Harry is. Still, it is doubtful his involvement would have made a great difference. The bottom line is the Death Eaters lost about two thirds of their combat power since the beginning of June and lost most of their finances and supplies. They’ve taken a huge hit and it will take them a while to recover.”

“You say he fell into a coma or something on the twenty-third?” Hermione asked.

Kingsley nodded. “That is what Snape reported.”

“That was the day Harry and I bound! That’s consistent with our theory that the bonding affected his horcruxes.”

“Dumbledore apparently went after one last week,” Kingsley said. “Or at least he said he has an idea where one is.”

“Did he get it?”

Kingsley shrugged. “No idea. He hasn’t said anything. Then again, he’s spending much of his spare time trying to find a way to keep the Goblins away and avoid being asked to pay the Ministry’s reparations. They have strongly suggested he should pay most of the four point two million that Harry demanded for the illegal enslavement of his citizens.”

“What’s this?” a voice asked. It was one of the Charenwell girls.

“The Duke made a demand for reparations against the British Magical Government,” Kingsley said. “They have until August tenth to pay 100,000 Galleons for each of the forty-two Charenwell witches illegally enslaved between 1989 and 1995.”

“The payment will be to compensate the families,” Harry said.

“What about the sixteen of us who have been returned?” Fiona Simpson asked. She was one of Harry’s Girls.

“They don’t know that,” Harry said. “And you’re still Concubines. Your life may be a lot better than you could have imagined, but that doesn’t change what happened to you or your families. Even if I could get the other twenty-six returned, they would still have to be bound to someone. I have no intention of cutting those bastards any slack whatsoever.”

“In that vein,” Remus said, “I have directed our Ambassador to the I.C.W. to record our claim with them.”

“What will that do?” Harry asked.

“Among other things,” Remus said, “now that Dumbledore is out as Supreme Mugwump, it means that if we impose sanctions on Britain, it is far more probable other nations will impose similar sanctions. Britain has been able to ignore the I.C.W. for years and ignore its rules and such because as Supreme Mugwump, Dumbledore could keep them from having to suffer any form of international scrutiny. That, obviously, has changed. Britain will have a rough go of it from now on.”

“And the I.C.W. will stay out of our way when we declare war?” Harry asked.

“Given that Her Majesty is in accord with your plan, they would be hard pressed to find any reason to intervene directly,” Remus said. “That’s not to say they won’t try and get the parties to negotiate...”

“Negotiate what?” Harry asked. “I do believe I have sufficient justification as it now stands to declare war, don’t I?”

“You do,” Remus agreed. “But I’m sure the I.C.W. would like to avoid that.”

“I’m sure they would,” Harry replied. “The problem is I can see no terms short of the total unconditional surrender and an occupation designed to take that society down. Anything less is counter-productive. That being said, we are a long way from being ready for a war.”

“Do you really see us as being an occupying force?” Remus asked. “That may require far more people than would be needed to take Britain in the first place.”

“It need not be just us,” Harry said. “What we have now is time; time to prepare, time to raise an Army and Air Force and time to work with our allies and find new ones. An international coalition might be better suited as an occupation force, provided they are progressive in nature and not just more of the same rubbish.”

Remus nodded and Harry noted both he and Cissy were writing notes.

“So my next question is,” Harry said, “will Dumbledore or the Ministry pay?”

“Dumbledore is selling off as much as he can,” Kingsley said.

“I am aware of that, seeing as we now own title to a fair few Hogwarts girls. I dare say there won’t be much of a dating pool for the blokes,” Harry chuckled. “Between those who’ve already been bound and those who will be, Hogwarts will be short fourteen Gryffindors, seventeen Hufflepuffs, fifteen Ravenclaws and five Slytherins. That’s about one out of every four girls if I’m not mistaken.”

“That many?” Mad-eye asked.

“And the damage falls more heavily on the upper years,” Hermione said. “Of the eighteen girls in our year, twelve are or will be here. Gryffindor won’t have any. Ravenclaw is left with just Lisa Turpin. Three Slytherins are left and two Hufflepuffs. Seventh years lost six of

twenty-two. Fifth years lost nine of twenty-five. Fourth years lost thirteen of twenty-six. Third years lost ten of twenty-eight girls. Even second year lost one of theirs.”

Harry nodded. “Those are just the ones who are still in school. The total number of Concubines and Consorts as a result of this plan will be a hundred and two.”

“Bloody hell!” Mad-eye said. “I assume you mean none will be attending school in Britain?”

“Why would we want to do that?” Luna asked.

“Good point.”

“So the question remains, will Dumbledore or the Ministry pay?” Harry asked.

“As for Dumbledore,” Mad-eye said, “he’s making one hell of an effort. My guess is he doesn’t want to deal with the Goblins if he can avoid it.”

“I guess having him run through with a Goblin sword was a bit much to hope for,” Harry sighed.

“There’s more, Harry,” Kingsley said. “Your little display at the Ministry made all the papers. About half the Order has quit. Now this may be a temporary thing to show their disgust with Dumbledore’s tactics or it may be more permanent. The few who have talked to me said that the damage to the Death Eaters in recent weeks makes walking away for now easier as the threat is not as obvious. Bloody fools if they believe that, but what hurts Dumbledore helps us, I’m afraid.”

“The idea was to knock all of them for a loop,” Harry said. “As safe as Charenwell is, I’d rather have them busy with things other than trying to find me. Speaking about that, I am curious as to how and why the Dursleys are here.”

“I thought you were getting on with your Cousin Dudley,” Hermione said.

“It appears he’s changed, but it’s too early to tell,” Harry admitted. “The question remains. I’ve been told the wards would prevent anyone who is a threat to me or this country.”

“They’re Muggles, Harry,” Remus said. “They might have been right bastards to you at Privet Drive, but can you honestly see them as a threat now?”

Harry had to admit they were not all that threatening now that they were outnumbered by magical ten to one.

“The intent based wards are for magical threats,” Remus continued. “Muggles are kept at bay by Muggle Repelling wards, disillusionment wards and the fact this place is unplottable. Magicals are not so easily deterred, hence the intent wards for them and anything they might think to send our way.

“As for how they got here, you did express concern for their well being given the magical threats to them.”

Harry nodded. “Now that I’m gone if the Death Eaters didn’t kill them Dumbledore might. I don’t like them, but that doesn’t mean I want them dead.”

“Your Uncle’s company is a major arms manufacturer and has been for over eighty years. That’s one of the industries that would be useful to us and as that company is owned by a company you control, getting them to build a plant here was easy. It turns out your Uncle was next up for a shot at plant manager. Didn’t take much effort on our part for his company to make him an offer he couldn’t refuse. As for getting him here, he and another family were flown in on one of our planes. The other family is named Wilson. Muggles, although two of their children are listed as magical. Mr. Wilson is a munitions expert and will act as the Production Manager.”

“So what you’re saying is we’re safe from Muggles ‘cause they can’t find this place?”

“Basically,” Remus nodded.

“And those death wards are for magical ‘cause they might be able to find us?”

“They haven’t really tried, at least not in recent memory. But yes, that was the reason for those wards to – er – deter them if they should become so bold.”

“I see,” Harry said. “So, what about the Ministry?”

“They are looking for a way out,” Kingsley said. “They might be willing to negotiate.”

“I will only consider that if they turn over the remaining young women,” Harry said. “And they will still owe a hundred thousand for each one they can’t find.”

“Even though they’re already here?”

“Why should the Ministry benefit from another’s misfortune,” Harry said. “They can’t possibly know I already have repatriated sixteen. Moreover, even if they find out, since they did not return them, they can reap no benefit.”

“Duly noted.”

“So will they pay?”

“They’ll probably pay some,” Kingsley said. “The Minister’s already sent an envoy to the I.C.W. to seek negotiations, as it is clear you won’t be showing up for any reason.”

“Let me know when we hear from the I.C.W.,” Harry said to Remus.



Remus nodded. "And our position?"

"Remains unchanged," Harry said. "A hundred thousand a head. You do know what they did is a justification for war?"

Remus nodded.

"However, you can let them know I might consider less if the others are repatriated."

"You'll have to find them bonds."

"I'm sure we can find them decent homes, Remus," Harry said.

"I wonder if we can get more mileage out of this than just reparations and putting pressure on the Ministry," Dora commented.

"How so?" Harry asked.

"Well, we've been 'debriefing' the girls who had been bound to the enemy and let's just say their stories are shocking."

"I gathered that from Stacey," Harry said.

"Both for our own purposes here at home and for – er – our efforts abroad," Dora continued, "I think we should publicize their mistreatment. We all know what the bond can be if used as originally intended. We also know from them and others how bad it can be and my guess is we've only scratched the surface in a way."

"Oh?"

"The bastards sell of sixty or more every year at those auctions," Dora said. "And that doesn't include private sales or debt claims such as you've also used. Do you really think there is a need for sixty or more women a year? And if there is, why? Think about it. Based upon those numbers, during the seven years I was in school, four hundred

and twenty young women were sold at auction. That's larger than the Hogwarts student body. Why so many?

"I mean sure, you can say they're sold because they can be, but still, the numbers don't make much sense when you consider that normally a witch should live over a hundred years following her sale. Given that number, aside from a need for – er – youthful slaves, how can you justify the demand? We know a few of the regular buyers only keep their girls for a few years and then sell them, but still it doesn't make sense. Unless..."

"Unless what?" Harry asked.

"Unless Minerva and Mallory and maybe even Amber are the exception and not the rule."

"What do you mean?" Hermione asked.

"A slave economy can only sustain itself if there is both a constant supply and constant demand," Dora said. "In most slave cultures, the live expectancy of the typical slave was not very long. Some slaves lived long lives, but many died relatively young, thus they needed to be replaced with new labor on a regular basis."

"Are you saying most of the girls die young?" Harry asked.

"I don't know, Harry. I can only talk about my own experiences and what I have learned from the others who 'served' elsewhere. But it is a theory that fits the facts. What need would there be for a concubine Minerva's age in general? Most serve as little more than whores or as domestics. But as most slave holders have house elves, about the only domestic jobs would be as wet nurse, nannies and such. And what happens when the child is older? Amber would have been thirty-five or so when Neville finished school. What would have happened to her?"

"I would have kept her," both Neville and Frank said.

Dora nodded as if she expected that reply. "But what about the pureblood supremacist who sees her as little more than chattel? And what about the Muggle Borns whom they see as animals? Do you honestly think they're pensioned off? What happens to them when they've outlived their uses to their Master and cannot attract another buyer? Do you really think they'd be maintained beyond that point?"

"You're suggesting they're killed?" Hermione asked. "But the bond prevents that."

"It prevents the Master from harming his slave, this is true. But the slave is still mortal. You ever wonder why the Ministry of Magic has an executioner when there is no death penalty?"

"I thought he was for dangerous creatures," Hermione said.

"Like they are common place," Dora snorted. "The Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures might have a case a year, maybe. And yet there's a full time executioner."

"So you're saying the – er – used witches are killed?" Hermione asked in shock.

"It's a theory," Dora said. "But it makes sense in a sick way."

"Anyway to prove it?" Harry asked.

"Not without getting someone to confess," Dora said. "I doubt the bastards even consider it wrong. I also doubt anyone's been keeping tabs on concubines or been looking into their welfare. It could be happening and we'd never know."

"Surely many of them have careers," Alice said. "Minerva did, as did you and Mallory."

"I don't doubt that others do," Dora said. "But if we assume an average of forty witches are bound for the first time each year, and the numbers are probably much higher than that, that means four

hundred have entered service since 1976. Since Minerva was bound, even using such a small number there would be over eighteen hundred concubines her age or younger. It's probably in excess of six or seven thousand. The only way to know for certain that a witch is not a Concubine is if she's married, but as a few do marry their binder, even that's not a certainty. Where are those eighteen hundred women – and it's probably a lot more than that?"

"So you think they've been – er – disposed of at some point?" Hermione asked, even though it was clear that was exactly what Dora thought.

"It fits the facts," Dora said.

"Circumstantial evidence at best," Alice said, "but there is a sick logic to it. But so what? What good is this information?"

"One of the challenges Harry faces," Luna said, "is getting the right public opinion on his side. Charenwell has never had to fight a war and certainly not an aggressive one. Unless riled, there would be resistance to a call to arms simply because they really can't see why what happens in far away Britain is of any concern. Likewise, we also want to get the Muggle Borns out. But you're asking them to leave their jobs, their homes, maybe even their families and move to a country they've never heard of. It takes a lot to convince people to so change their lives.

"This could help do that," Luna continued. "We don't have to state it as fact really, just a theory that supports the facts we can prove. The people here will be upset, to say the least, and especially since Dumbledore saw fit to sell their daughters into that hell simply because he felt he could. And do you think the British Muggle Borns will be so keen to keep rooted in a country where their lives are so clearly worth nothing? Being called a Mudblood and being kept out of some careers might be annoying, but not so much to give up being British. But being little more than sheep to the slaughter? You really think the sheep would go there if they had a choice?"

"And your ideas?" Harry asked.

“We publish all we know,” Luna said. “We compile what we know and give it to the Charenwell press. Merlin knows it will sell papers. Most of the Muggle Borns at Hogwarts take the Quibbler, so we can also publish there. As we know where the other Muggle Borns are, we could always send them complimentary editions.”

“The Ministry will just ban it,” Hermione noted.

“Daddy always loved when that happened,” Luna said. “Circulation always went through the roof ‘cause people wanted to know why it was banned. While they’re very good at declaring something as banned, the Ministry has a terrible record when it comes to enforcement.”

“She has a point there,” Cissy said.

“We need to keep the pressure on,” Remus added. “It’s not wise to let your opponent catch his breath if you can avoid that.”

“But Luna’s father...” Harry began.

“The July issue of the Quibbler went out the day he was murdered,” Luna said. “That was the reason why he was home on a Monday. We got time to get our August issue ready. Your elves here were quite thorough when they recovered what they could from my old home. Daddy’s printing press is in storage here at the Estate along with enough ink and paper for at least 10,000 issues. If Daphne and Astoria and some others are willing to help, we could get an issue out by the first week in August.”

“It would have the added benefit of undermining the Ministry should it seek to negotiate more favorable terms,” Kingsley said. “I don’t think the I.C.W. would look the other way where lives are suggested as lost. They will probably demand an accounting and without Dumbledore to keep the I.C.W. off their backs, the Ministry might well be busy trying to disprove your theory. And I can assure you that at least some member nations in the I.C.W. will be doing their best to

prove your theory. A fair few countries have been itching for an opportunity to stick it to arrogant Britain for years.”

“All of which ultimately plays into our hands,” Remus said. “We can get some support for mobilization here and keep them too busy to cause is problems there. That should aid in our evacuation efforts both by convincing the 'at risk' population to leave and to keep the Ministry looking the other way when they do.”

“Okay, let’s do it,” Harry said. “Anything else for today?”

“Our ‘sympathizers’ within the Department of Mysteries,” Kingsley said. “The ones who gave us the master list of Muggle Borns have been busy again.” He reached into a satchel and produced a large book. “This is the master list of lists,” he said. “Basically, it’s the name and address of every magical in Britain without regard to blood status. DMLE uses this to find warded properties. It’s accurate enough to send a post owl and can get you within a half a mile of even the best protected property. What we do is use this book to get close then send a post owl and watch where it goes. It allows us to find the location of even a house under the Fidelius Charm, although we still can’t break that. But, it lets us monitor the area just in case. Basically, with this book and some decent intel, we can create accurate target lists.”

“Excellent,” Harry said. “But there’s still the problem of wards.”

“Which is what we want to work on,” Fred said.

“As we said, jokes are fun,” George followed.

“But there are bigger and better things to do with our time,” Fred added.

“We’re thinking of making some kind of ward detector.”

“No idea how it will work.

“But if it works it’ll be bloody useful.”

“Thinking of using your airplanes for it,” Fred said. “Verity and Alicia think it could work.”

“We’ll need a test location or two,” George added.

“And need to learn the wards and see the runes or arithmancy involved.”

“But we think we can make something that can...”

“See through wards...”

“For lack of a better word.”

“Any other grandiose plans?” Harry asked.

“Loads,” the twins said in unison.

“Replenishing charms for ammunition,” Fred said.

“Can increase a magazine...”

“Or a plane’s guns load...”

“By a factor of five...”

“Or even ten.”

“And yet the person or plane doesn’t have to carry all that.”

“We hope so see some Muggle stuff...”

“Might be able to magically enhance it for our purposes...”

“Or adapt it to work with magic...”

“Or some such, who knows?”

“Sky’s the limit!”

“What we’d really like to make are portable ward generators,” George said. “You could then drop an anti-apparition ward on the bad guys without them knowing.”

“Ward busters too,” Fred added. “Still only an idea, but think about something you could toss at a property and bring down wards.”

“Bloody useful!”

“What do you need?” Harry asked.

“Time,” Fred said.

“And we regret money.”

“And wards and a property we can play with.”

“I’ll see what can be done,” Harry said. “And if you have any other brilliant ideas that might aid our little war effort, don’t hesitate to talk to us.”

“We serve at your pleasure, Your Dukeness!” Fred said.

“Which indirectly brings up another point,” Remus said. “You need to let the people know we are preparing for a war.”

Harry nodded. “I knew that was coming up sooner or later. What do you recommend?”

“You’ve already laid the groundwork, Harry,” Remus replied. “The articles Luna’s proposing should help, but even without them we need to move forward. It’s a fair bet we can get legislation through the High



Council now. The enslavement of our girls coupled with their keeping you from us is sufficient grounds.”

“And the fact they set my parents up to be killed,” Harry added. “Not to mention the murder of Duke Charlus. But I don’t want to say let’s go to war just yet.”

“But you need them behind you, Harry,” Remus said. “You need them to see the need for an Army and Air Force. The ladies here cannot be the only ones, you know.”

Harry nodded. “How soon?”

“Arguably, the sooner the better,” Remus said. “They must know that Jamestown is not some folly. They must know just how bad things are in Britain and that what happens in Britain matters. They must know we have already made commitments to the Crown we intend to keep. I’m sure they will understand, especially as it will be a couple of years at least before war is really necessary.”

“And a couple of years before we can even hope to carry it out,” Harry nodded. “How soon?”

“The sooner the better, Harry,” Remus replied.

“I could go on the telly, I suppose,” Harry said. “Next week?”

“I’d wait until after your meeting with the Prime Minister and his people,” Hermione suggested.

“That would be prudent,” Remus agreed.

“Friday then?” Harry asked.

Remus nodded.

“You think we could have the concubine story to the local press by then?” Harry asked Luna.

“We can try,” she said.

“Right then,” Harry nodded. “Anything else?”

“The Goblins have managed to transport the confiscated property,” Bill said. “It’s scheduled to arrive by ship sometime next week.”

“What do we know about it?”

Bill shrugged. “Just generalities,” he replied. “Loads of potions and potions ingredients for certain. The Goblins didn’t bother with an inventory as the priority was to get it out of the country before someone figured a way to stop them. There are some other things the Goblins said might be of some interest, but they would like Fleur and I to look it all over when it arrives.”

Harry nodded. “You will keep me advised?”

“Of course,” Bill said.

SATURDAY, July 20th, 1996 – The Burrow, Ottery St. Catchpole, Devon, U.K.

Molly Weasley returned to the Burrow after yet another fruitless day of trying to repair the damage to her family in the wake of the reading of the Will. Bill, Fred and George were nowhere to be found and no one had any idea where they had gone. The only good news, if there was any, was they were not dead. Her special clock showed they were either “at work” or “home” or “travelling,” although they obviously had not set foot in the Burrow. She knew wherever they now were they considered it home, just as Charlie considered Romania his home and Percy considered his flat in London home. But wherever this home was, it was not accepting post owls as they all had returned without delivering their letters.

Ginny was also a surprise as her hand also pointed to “home” much of the time. When Molly had first returned to the Burrow after that traitor Potter stole her daughter and last chance at a proper

Pureblood life away to become his pleasure slave, the clock had originally said Ginny was "In Mortal Peril." But that had changed by the next morning when it read "home." Molly had hoped that meant she escaped somehow, although from what she knew of the Concubine Bond, that seemed unlikely in the extreme. Molly doubted Potter had taken her as a Consort or that anyone else had either. But something had changed. Still, Ginny was gone and with her any hope of using her to get at a wealthy man's fortune. All she was left with was Ron and maybe Percy although Percy still refused to see her as she was still loyal to Dumbledore. Of the two, Percy was the one most likely to marry into the right family as he was smart, hard working and ambitious. Ron was almost a right off. He was not dumb, but hard working and ambitious were qualities that would never describe the boy.

Arthur had left her and the Order, a double betrayal in her eyes. Leaving her she could understand, even though the man was too bloody noble for his own good. He never understood how the world worked, which explained why he was stuck in a dead end job at the Ministry and unlikely to ever move up significantly. The man was smart enough, but it seemed his son Ron inherited the man's ambition. Fortunately, she had squirreled away money over the years, far more than her husband suspected. They had been payments from Dumbledore for her cooperation and for use of her daughter in time. She could not live the life she wanted, but she could at least keep the Burrow and feed herself and her bottomless pit of a stomach son and still be able to afford to send him for his last two years at Hogwarts.

She entered the Burrow and saw Ron in the living room on the couch. His back was to her and he seemed to be leaning back as if examining the ceiling. She walked in and saw his pants were down around his ankles and there was a young, naked woman whom she had never met kneeling between his legs and performing a wholly unnatural and disgusting act upon his manhood with her mouth.

"RONALD WEASLEY!" she bellowed, breaking the mood as it were. The young woman stopped what she was doing revealing far more of Molly's son than she ever intended to see. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHO IS THIS ... THIS ... THIS HARLOT?"

Ron struggled to pull up his pants. "Er ...," he began, "well Dumbledore did promise..."

"PROMISE WHAT?"

"He'd get me a concubine..."

"As I recall, that promise was for Granger, not any slag off the street!"

"That's not what he told me," Ron said. "Granger was the first option, but I was to be rewarded for doing what I did with Harry."

"And how do you expect to keep her?"

"What do you mean? She's mine now. We bonded and everything!"

"And where will she live? You think of that? How will you pay for her?"

"She's already paid for," Ron started.

"I meant food! The girl's got to eat, you know. Food costs money! And I do hope she has some clothes..."

"Dumbledore said there's an account with 2,000 Galleons for that," Ron began.

"And that's all!" Molly said. "If you have any plans for using it for any other reason, you can forget about it!"

"But Mum, Dumbledore gave that money to me!" Ron protested. He knew he should have bought his Firebolt when he had the chance. Now his Mum was going to ruin anything.

"In case you've forgotten, Ronald Weasley," Molly said, "you're not yet of age! Therefore YOU can't access that account. Now since you've decided to debase yourself and soil this House with that thing,

the least I can do is make sure that money is used to keep her healthy. Goodness knows how she was treated before! The girl looks half starved!”

“But Dumbledore...”

“NO BUTS, RONALD! You want to use money for something else, GET A JOB!”

Ron frowned at that.

“Now, just where do you think she’ll live?”

“Here of course,” Ron said. “And I got a flat in Hogsmeade for when school starts...”

“I don’t believe this! Where will she stay when she’s here?”

“My room...”

“I don’t think so! Are you going to marry her? Because if not she sleeps in another room! No questions! And she will be dressed when she’s out of her room! This is not a bordello. You want her for sex? Not out here! Your room or hers! And consider yourself lucky, Mister, that I’ll even allow you that much under my roof! Now the lot of you go upstairs and make yourself presentable! AND I WANT YOU BOTH DRESSED AND DOWN HERE IN FIVE MINUTES. You and your toy can spend the afternoon de-gnoming the garden! Goodness knows it’s gone to seed in the last week!”

Ron and the naked girl practically ran up the stairs.

“What was Dumbledore thinking,” Molly muttered, “giving a sixteen year old a concubine like that?” At least had it been Hermione, Molly could have insisted the girl stay with her parents when not attending to Ron’s perverted needs!

A/N: No, I am not going to describe every time turned day in detail! Just know that they’re happening.

## RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa Oliver, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
12. Fiona Michelle Simpson, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).

14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P

2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*

3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*

4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

6. Lana Catherine Powell, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

9. Christine Celine Paulson, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P

3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

4. Annette Lucille Harper, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

5. Deborah Leigh McLean, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*
4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
6. Coleen Harrington, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
9. Caroline Folsom, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SD); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
7. Eileen O'Malley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle Hanson, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
2. Amelia Renee Carpenter, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).
2. Sandra Ellen Butler, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).



5. Marie White, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-THREE: RETURNING THE LOST

SUNDAY, JULY 21st, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

It seemed with each passing week Sunday brunch at Martha's was even more complicated than the week before, Harry thought. Then again, it seemed that each week his family grew. The first Sunday he was here was the only one to date he had not taken his ladies to brunch. Then again, he didn't know about Martha's then. The next weekend, the new Houses Potter and Black descended on the place as Harry brought Hermione, Dora, Mallory, Minerva, Daphne and Astoria with him. They had packed into one of Grandfather's Rolls Royce motorcars, the largest car he had. The next weekend, Luna had joined them and that was the last time he could fit everyone in that car at once. Last weekend, Ginny and Stacey were there as well. Now Tabatha, Fiona, Laura, Karen and Rhonda were with them as well. Martha's did not mind the business and it was a relaxing way to begin a Sunday, which had turned out to be a good thing as two of the Sunday brunches were followed by a command performance at Government House. While the plans for this Sunday were not so involved, he was still hosting a lunch back at the Manor for all the Harems and the families of the sixteen witches who had been returned to their homeland. Needless to say, this made him nervous.

True, he had met six of the families the week before. But those witches were all bound to the Weasleys, not him. This was the first time a girl's father would see him as the wizard his daughter was bound to. Needless to say, while he hoped it would go as well as last Sunday had – the incident with Cissy notwithstanding – this was a moment when his being fifteen came back with a vengeance. He knew he should go through with it and knew he would eventually have to meet the families of many more of his ladies. He wasn't nervous about some families like the Greengrasses who knew what was going on. It was the families of the Muggle Borns who scared him silly. How would they react? Which would be more difficult? Would it be families like Stacey's and Mallory's who had lost their daughter for years or the ones whose daughters had only been concubines a short while or all of them?

Fortunately, his girls were very good at distracting him from his worries, at least the ones who had been with him the longest were. Tabatha was also getting more relaxed about things, which was somewhat surprising given she had no clue this kind of thing could happen. The four newest girls were showing various signs of nervousness, which did not help Harry at all.

Laura Oliver had been the first of the repatriated witches who had bonded with Harry. She was twenty-one years old and her family lived in Pottersport. She was taken as a Concubine five years earlier when she was sixteen. It had been the summer following her O.W.L.s at Prince Edward's School of Magic in Yorkshire where her family had attended for ages. She was the oldest of three children. At the time, she had been in England visiting a friend for her birthday. She never saw her family again. Her brother Bobby (who hated that name) was an annoying fourteen year old then. Her sister Diane was twelve.

Laura was bought by a man named Terrance Flint, a low level Death Eater apparently. In a way this was a good thing. Flint was too low to be expected to entertain and had used her mainly as a compliant mistress as his wife was arguably very unattractive and had no other redeeming features. She did not like it in any event, especially as her Master's son did use her as well and was more than willing to share her with his friends. She had been allowed to keep her wand, although she could only use it to mend her few clothes which were always in need of mending as the men who used her enjoyed tearing them off of her as a prelude to worse. Until now, Laura's life as a concubine was not as horrible as Stacey's had been, but that was hardly saying anything.

She was bound into House Potter. As the four of them refused to volunteer – something most Concubines were conditioned into avoiding – their bonding order had been by lot. It was obvious that life here would be very different than her last five years. Decent clothing aside, she would be allowed to resume her education, something her former owner had stopped. She might have taken the love bond with Harry by now, but was waiting. The truth was she had not seen her family in five years and was worried sick about her younger sister Diane. She would not take the bond until she was sure Diane was safe and sound and had not become a whore like she had been.

Diane would be seventeen now and could well have been a concubine for at least a year and maybe more.

Karen Green was the last of the four to bond with Harry and was bound to House Black. She was eighteen years old and from Charlestown. She was sixteen and in London to attend a concert with friends when she had been taken. She was bound to Harken Goyle who used her almost daily for his own perverse pleasures, ending her education after five years at Prince Edward's. She did not know which was worse, that bastard or his son and the vile boy's two friends. Okay, she did know which was worse. The older man only took her alone where as the son liked her with a group of boys over and over again.

Karen had feared her horrible life would never end and that she would never see her home or her family again. She was a middle child. Her sister Pattie was thirteen when Karen disappeared and Karen hoped the girl avoided her fate. Her brother Jeff had been nineteen at the time and was married to a younger witch named Jessica who was expecting later than summer. They had not told the family what they were having and it was something they all had been looking forward to. But Karen never found out for this hell had befallen her.

Perhaps there were advantages to being the last as it were, she thought. She had been bound to Harry on Friday and had almost three days to see what this life would and could be like. Given the hell she had been through, it was almost easy to Love Bond with Harry. She also felt it was necessary because if what she was told was true, and she hoped it was, there would be nothing like the Goyle's in her future for she would never be transferred or treated like a whore again. She hoped her parents would understand, but she was eighteen and it was her decision to bind herself to the young man who had given her another chance at life.

Rhonda Lester was the youngest of the four rescued witches who had bound to Harry the last week. She went third, becoming a Potter Girl the previous Thursday afternoon. She was seventeen years old and had only been a Concubine for a year. She had finished her O.W.L. year at St. David's when it happened. As with the others, she

obviously picked the wrong summer to spend time in Britain. Her “owner” was named Theodore Nott, a Death Eater who bought her in celebration of the return of his Dark Lord. She was used jointly by him and his son, who was being “taught” the “proper way” to “deal with” Muggle Born “whores.” Basically, she was to be used for group entertainments which she dreaded but could neither avoid nor learn to accept even if they did occur at least once a week and usually more often. The younger Nott had found a way to get her into his school, which was the worst as it meant hours and hours with a line of boys waiting for their turn with her.

She found it highly ironic that she was the Muggle Born in that situation. There were no Muggles in her family on either side for at least six generations, meaning she was probably more “Pureblood” than most of the Purebloods who were raping her. Like a good Charenwell girl, she could trace her family line back to at least one Lord Potter, in her case it was Baron Stefan Potter who had owned the lands that would later become Charenwell and one of the Baron’s ladies, most likely a concubine, not that it mattered as much on the Island of Shen. Since the Potter line went back at least as far as Camelot, her magical credentials were more impeccable than the bastards who treated her like an animal. The problem was that her bond prevented her from correcting their ignorance, not that they would believe her in any event.

Rhonda was from Port of Darby and also a middle child. Her older sister Valarie would now be twenty. Valarie had warned her not to go to Britain in the summers, but could not tell her why. Had Valarie not married a Charenwell wizard, Rhonda would have suspected now that she too was caught, raped and enslaved. Now she wondered what her sister knew and why she never told her. Still, she wanted to see Valerie and her parents and even her younger now fourteen year old brother Clarence again.

Rhonda knew this life would be different. Her Harry – for that’s how she already saw him – was not like the Goyles in any way. Had she not known better, she would have sworn he had been raised here in Charenwell and not in Britain as he could care less about bloodlines in evaluating people. She could see this in the way he treated his girls. She also knew he would keep her for his own forever, as he promised.

The boy might not yet be sixteen, but he seemed much older to her and far more mature in many ways. Each girl was treated slightly differently, she had seen. Not any better or worse than any of the others, but it was still different. Rhonda knew this was most likely because they were all different people as well. The boy knew how to make each and every one of them feel special, and that was a talent given their diverse backgrounds and ages. For Merlin's sake, her House Matron was fifty-two years older than the lad and he didn't seem to see that as an issue! It was easy Love Bonding with her rescuer. She hoped her parents would be happy for her as she was finally having a chance to be happy herself.

Fiona Simpson was the oldest of the witches who had involuntarily joined Harry's family that week. As different as this was from her prior experience, it was still not her choice that brought her here. Her free choice had ended seven years ago when she was fifteen and spending the summer with a friend of hers from St. George's school. Her friend was a Muggle Born British witch and had disappeared the night before, she remembered. The girl's family was frantic and Fiona had no idea what happened and could hardly help with the budding investigation. Then she was summoned.

Her first "Master" was a wandmaker in Wales named Cuthbert Shaw. He summoned her to him the very night after her friend had disappeared and raped her. There was no other way to describe it in her mind, the bond be damned! She was fifteen and a fifty something, over weight man took her against her will. She was basically his mistress for the next few years. True, she was allowed to complete her education, although she had been transferred to St. David's for her last three years and she did spend her weekends and Holidays working in his shop as his assistant, which was better than many girls in her position could expect, but she came to dread the night when he'd inevitably take her, or at least try to. Maybe it was his age or something, but he as often as not was not physically up for what his lust filled mind wanted. Eventually, he blamed her for his inadequacies and traded her to Horace Rosier in the spring of 1992 on the condition that the new bastard allowed her to sit for her N.E.W.T.s in exchange for a properly trained wench.

Her new Master was a brutal bastard and welcomed her to his then stable of four girls by brutally raping her while the others were forced to watch. She was allowed to sit her N.E.W.T.s, but once done, the man snapped her wand and she'd been a whore in his brothel ever since. The man eventually sold or lost his other three "bitches," but kept her because she was popular with his few customers because she was still a "defiant little Mudblood." Needless to say, her last seven years of life left her with a very low opinion of the male of the species and she was still trying to figure out whether Harry was the aberration, or whether the others were. This was the main reason why she had yet to Love Bond with him, although she also believed it was her defiant nature as well.

The truth was she liked it here. The truth was her bonding with Harry, which she was now resigned to, had been the first truly intimate experience of her life. The others had taken her innocence. Somehow, this young man was restoring her dignity and had made a woman and a witch out of her again. She knew this was why at least one of his other "Girls" had Love Bonded with him. She was also certain he had a certain "Knight in shining armor" charm going as well. She knew this life was going to be very different and all she needed to do was accept all he offered, which was more than she thought possible even a few days ago. Still, she was headstrong, which he didn't seem to mind. That was obvious as there were several witches in his family who could be called that. She was in Black House and Dora and Daphne clearly were like that. Potter House seemed to be filled with headstrong women. But it seemed she was one of the few who was holding back on the Bonding.

She didn't really know why, aside from a need to protest her past life. While she knew of Concubines before – after all she was born and raised in Port of Darby and had at least five Ducal Concubines in her ancestry – she really did not know much about the bond. She was quietly furious to learn her previous experiences were with men who chose to abuse the bond for their own base pleasures. It was clear this Harry was not like that. Since her bonding, she had been intimate with him almost every day, and all by her choice. She even volunteered to act as a cross bonder the very next day. But still she waited.

She was now pretty sure what she was waiting for. Fiona was the youngest daughter in a family of four children. She had not seen either her parents or siblings in seven long, terrible years. She had come to Britain that terrible summer in 1989 to go shopping with some friends. She should never have left Charenwell, but how could she have known this would happen? Charenwell witches had never been sold into bondage, or at least it had been several centuries since the last time. She had recently learned that one of the heads of the British Magical government had instituted this policy following the death of Duke Charles and she would have been one of the very first to suffer from his acts of international piracy.

In 1989, she was fifteen and her oldest sister Carol was twenty-three. Carol was married by then to a Robert Shaw and had two children at the time: Agnes, who was then three and Jack who had just had his first birthday. Her next oldest sister was Camille, then twenty and recently married to Jason Parks. They were expecting their first child any day. Fiona never even met this child. She had an older brother Michael, who was then seventeen and entering his final year in magical school. Seven years of her life had been taken from her. Seven years of her family. Today Harry was going to begin to end that as she was going to meet her family for the first time. She didn't know what to think about that. In one way, it was a dream come true and signaled the end of a long nightmare. On the other hand, would they accept her still knowing what she had become? It was not like she chose to become a concubine, but would they understand? Would they understand that Harry was the first man who had treated her like a human being? (Hard as that might seem seeing as he was not even sixteen!) Needless to say, she was nervous.

The brunch surprised the four witches from Charenwell. Apparently Harry had done this every week since he arrived and the regulars were used to seeing him and his ladies here. The other new witch, Tabatha, seemed to be unsurprised by it, not realizing that most concubines are not seen in public as such, at least not in Britain. Here, however, they were welcomed. The four repatriated witches were stunned by the reception they received and the praise lavished upon Harry for finding a way to bring them home. Harry seemed to know all the regulars here and the five new witches were surprised in their own way that the Duke was just Harry to this crowd. He was not



the Head of State, but a neighbor and they were not concubines or slaves, but his ladies and his family and were treated as such.

It was almost disappointing for the Charenwell witches that the brunch had to end. Karen and Laura both remembered coming to Martha's with their family on special occasions like birthdays and it felt almost normal to them. They even recognized some of the patrons who remembered them and their families and welcomed them back most profusely. The people here welcomed them home and did not seem to care the manner of their return, although a few of the younger witches did tease them a little about finding their handsome prince. For all four, it was almost normal.

SUNDAY, JULY 21st, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Dudley and Clara sat in the back of what looked like a London cab. It had picked them up at Clara's home. Dudley had been there the day before when she received her invite to Harry's lunch. He, of course, agreed to go with her. His father was not happy about it to say the least and it was clear to Dudley he had received an invitation too, but his father had hoped by not telling him, Dudley would be none the wiser. Dudley again reminded his father who would be put out on the street and it was not Dudley. He saw hide nor hair of the man the next morning when he dressed to leave for Clara's. This was a good thing because he did not want to be in a mood.

The trip had taken them far beyond Pottersport and well inland from the sea it seemed. They passed through fields and farms that reminded Dudley a lot of rural England and through a town by a river Clara told him was called Potter's Vineyard. After about a half an hour, the car turned onto a lane that disappeared into a forest. They passed through an open gate and past two large houses, one on either side of the road and a new looking road that led off to the right into the woods. It was not too long before the cab left the trees and turned right at a huge expanse of open lawn. At the far end was what had to be the largest house Dudley had ever seen. He wondered if it was larger than Buckingham Palace (it wasn't.) The huge house was at the far end of the lawn. On either side two huge buildings were well under construction. He could see what looked like steel frames providing the outline of what looked like two more huge mansions and

stone work on the exterior of each that already reached well about what was probably the ground floor.

The car soon pulled up to the huge finished Manor, right at a large open entryway that Dudley could swear might have swallowed his old home in Surry (it was not really that big.)

“Well,” the driver said, “this is it, you two. Potter Manor.”

“Bloody hell,” Dudley thought. It sure was a long way from a cupboard under the stairs, although he would never say that to Harry. He and Clara got out and stared at the huge building that seemed to soar overhead.

“I guess this is what they call seeing how the other half lives,” Clara chuckled.

“Bit much, if you ask me,” Dudley said.

“Shall we go in?”

Dudley nodded.

They passed through the huge, open doorway into a large room filled with potted plants and comfortable looking furniture. It seemed there was a short person in a formal dinner jacket waiting. As they drew closer, Dudley noticed the short person could not be human. The features were off and the pointed ears...

“Master Dursley and Miss Jasper, I presume?” the creature said with a bow. “I am Darda, Head Elf of the House staff. The guests are meeting on the veranda which is straight back.”

“Thank you, Darda,” Clara said. She took Dudley’s hand and led him towards the back of the house which seemed like it was a long way away. There was another set of double doors, these smaller than the main entry, that opened onto a huge patio which they guessed was the veranda. There were already several people present and Dudley looked for Harry. He saw Harry with a group of people at what

looked like several yards away and led Clara towards the group. Dudley was pleased that Harry was in just a collared shirt and slacks. He was worried he was underdressed wearing the same.

“Ah Big-D!” Harry said with a smile. “And Clara! Welcome!”

Dudley saw that Harry was talking to a pretty young woman he had not seen before.

“Clarice?” Harry said to the young woman, “this is Dudley Dursley and Clara Jasper. Dudley? This is Clarice Jamison.”

“Pleased to meet you,” Dudley and Clara said before they each shook Clarice’s hand.

“She’s not one of your...” Dudley began.

“Nope,” Harry said. “There are laws against that.”

“What laws?” Dudley asked confused.

“It seems even dating your sister is frowned upon,” Harry said with a chuckle. “Bonding with one is right out!”

“And creepy,” Clarice added.

“Sister?” Dudley asked in shock.

Harry nodded and proceeded to tell Dudley all about his younger sister and Dudley’s new cousin.

“It’s nice to know I’m not your only relative here, isn’t it?” Harry said when he finished.

“I – I guess. Mum never said anything about a sister.”

“My guess is she didn’t know. We’re not twins.”

“I’m thirteen months younger,” Clarice said. “I wasn’t even two months old when our parents were killed.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be,” Clarice said. “Until a few weeks ago all I knew was that I was adopted by my folks here. Didn’t know I had a brother.”

“And our guess is one of my enemies wanted it that way,” Harry added.

“That Dumbledore guy?” Dudley asked.

“How’d...” Harry began.

“Clara’s granddad told me ‘bout him. He’s the one who sent you to us when you weren’t supposed to be sent and the one who kept you away from all this. Makes sense, since that Voldemort guy doesn’t seem that nice.”

“Dumbledore’s not too nice either,” Harry said darkly.

“So I gather. Then again, all this is a bit much.”

Harry looked at him confused.

“Long way from Privet Drive,” Dudley said deciding not to mention the cupboard.

“Indeed it is,” Harry replied. “To be honest, I’ve been here a month and haven’t even seen all of it yet.”

“You could get lost in there, couldn’t you?”

“I try not to,” Harry said.

“And what’s up with out front?”

“Need more space.”

“Really? For what?”

“When all’s said and done, there’ll be thirty-nine families living here between me and my ladies and the Longbottoms and theirs.”

Dudley blinked. “Er ... bit much, don’t you think?”

Harry shrugged. “Can you think of anything about my life that’s ever been normal?”

“Not without hurting myself,” Dudley chuckled. “If you ask me that flat in Pottersport and Clara here are plenty.”

“Thanks Dudley,” Clara said.

“Glad you like the place,” Harry said.

“I like the town,” Dudley chuckled. “Dad hates it. No surprise there. Mum’s terrified to leave to do the shopping, again no surprise. Never really saw how stupid they are ‘til coming here. So, aside from showing me your place, what’s this really about?”

“Family,” Harry said. “My girls have been on me about not getting to know Clarice here. You’re her Cousin, so that’s why you’re here. We’ve got cousins from the Potter side around somewhere. But the real reason is we managed to – er – repatriate ten girls from Britain.”

“Ten more?” Dudley asked. “Weren’t there five or six last weekend?”

Harry nodded. “They’re going to be reunited with their families. The other six families will be here as well. And for once, I am not the center of attention!”

“Er – and these girls were ...?”

“Still are,” Harry said with a slight frown. “Bloody thing about those bonds are they are permanent. While the Consort Bond is no problem that way, Concubines can be and usually are. Once a girl’s a Concubine, she’s one for life. She has to be bound to a wizard or ...”

“Or it will be bad for her,” Clara said. “In most cases they die, I’m told. That’s why it’s illegal to sell them here.”

“Then how’d you get...?”

“From Britain,” Harry said.

“Excuse me?” an older man said to Harry, “are you Lord Potter?”

Harry nodded nervously.

“Joshua Simpson and this is my wife Anne,” the man said with a nervous smile. “Fiona is our daughter and we wanted to thank you for what you did bringing her back and all.”

“I wish I could have done more,” Harry said earnestly. “All I did was bring them home. I couldn’t break their bonds.”

“We know, Milord,” Anne said. She had tears in her eyes. “We know she still has to be bound, but she’s home and for now that’s all that matters. Thank you for saving her.”

“My pleasure,” Harry said politely. “And what do you do, if I may ask? Fiona hasn’t told me and I’m afraid I forgot to ask.”

“Retired,” Joshua said. “Worked the merchant fleet for over thirty years. Now, I’m writing. We eventually learned from the Lord Mayor’s office what happened to Fiona and ... well, someone’s got to do something, right?”

Harry nodded. “The whole thing’s wrong.”

“Did you know you might be saving her when you bankrupted the Death Eaters?” Joshua asked.

“Should have thought of it,” Harry said. “But no. It never crossed my mind, to be honest. Where is she?”

“With her brother and sisters,” Anne said, “meeting all her nieces and nephews. Fiona was our youngest and ...” the woman sniffled ... “we feared she had died. She never met most of our grandchildren. Thank you for bringing her back to us.”

“You do know...” Harry began.

“We know you had to bind her to someone and we are proud that you found room for her here,” Joshua said. “It’s a bit flashy, but...”

“Not really my style either,” Harry admitted. “Turns out I needed the space though.”

“How many does this make it?” Dudley asked.

“Fourteen so far,” Harry admitted. “Twelve Concubines as of now.”

“Now?” Anne asked.

“I bought several at this year’s Auction in London,” Harry replied. “Many of them my wife Hermione and I knew and consider friends. The others? Well, I decided it was time someone did something so I bought all first time lots for ten times the market price. At least that was my opening bid. Some cost a bit more.”

“How many? How much?” Joshua asked.

“Fifty-one,” Harry replied. “Over a hundred and twenty-thousand Galleons. Would have paid whatever it took. I regret, none of those girls were from here, sorry.”

“Hmph!” Joshua said, “over six hundred thousand quid? That should do a number on their Concubine trade. Might well end it. Cornered the bloody market, did you?”

“In first time sales,” Harry nodded. “I hoped by doing that and something else I had planned, that would be the end of it.”

“And what else do you have planned?”

“In that regard? I hope to convince most if not all the British Muggle Borns and their families to move here.”

“Explains that construction on the South Coast,” Joshua said. “How many?”

“Twenty thousand,” Harry said. “Maybe more. But seeing as Muggle Born witches make up at least eighty percent of the supply, getting them out...”

“Will be the end of it,” Joshua said.

“I don’t understand,” Dudley said. “That doesn’t make sense. If you corner the market on this year’s concubines and effectively eliminate next year’s supply, how does that destroy the market? Doesn’t that mean next year’s witches will come from other sources because prices are higher? That’s what market economy is about right? If the demand for goods suddenly far exceeds the supply, that either drives up prices or encourages new sources of supply or both, but the market for the goods remains.”

“If we were talking about video games or other widgets, you would be right,” Mr. Simpson said. “But do not confuse a slave economy – which is what the concubine trade is – with a market economy. They are totally different animals and historically slave economies are doomed to failure because by their very nature they are an economic fiction.”



“A slave economy requires three things to survive. Eliminate or even damage any one of them, the whole mess collapses. First, it requires an amoral society or class that believes in its superiority over all things and all people. But, even with that, the slave economy requires a constant demand for cheap labor and a constant supply of cheap labor. Short of a slave revolt, which is always a concern in such cultures, any change in the artificial balance is fatal to the whole system.

“In recent history, Europe and non-magical Britain went through two slave holding periods. The first was what is commonly known as the feudal period and the slaves were known as serfs. Serfdom survived because cheap or free labor for the Lord's fields and lands was abundant due to a large population in a predominantly agrarian society. It died to a significant degree following the Black Death in the late 1340's. Labor now had value because it was not abundant and the Lord now had to pay for labor or lose it altogether, and labor knew it could simply walk to the next manor should it's Lord not treat it well.

“That society is not directly relevant as it was not a slave market where human beings were truly bought and sold. But the same demands created the later slave market and same flaws destroyed it. That later slave market was a product of colonial expansion. Vast new territories were conquered throughout the world, and for our purposes mainly in the Americas. Those territories could be exploited, but that required labor and, more important, cheap labor. The great political upheavals that would one day compel millions to leave Europe had not yet occurred, so there was not a large supply of surplus labor from Europe. There was, however, a market for slaves in West Africa and the Europeans paid well by African standards even if it was next to nothing for the Europeans.

“For well over a century, there was a constant demand for more slaves as more lands needed cheap and abundant labor. Crops such as sugar cane, cotton and tobacco were highly profitable, but highly labor intensive at the time and required huge farms where “free” labor was more cost effective than paying for labor. When the European nations outlawed the international slave trade and the Royal Navy enforced the ban, it did not mean the immediate end of slavery, but

effectively ended the slavers in Africa. What kept the trade going in the Americas was the continued need for “free” labor in the fields and the supply generated by breeding.

“This economy was only profitable for slave holders in certain crops, namely cotton, sugar and tobacco. Slave holding died out elsewhere either because there was not the need for labor, or the crops or business were not profitable enough to sustain the fiction. Slaves are not free. They cost money. They cost money to buy, house, clothe and feed. By the nineteenth century, paid labor was even cheaper and more abundant. It was cheaper to pay a white immigrant to work horrendous hours in horrible conditions in a mine or factory than it would have cost to have a slave in the same job, for the factory owner did not have to care about housing, clothing or feeding his workers. The factory owners lost nothing if the laborer quit or was killed or crippled as there was another person he could hire at no cost. Slave owners had no such luxury, for lack of a better word. They had to pay for their labor up front and over time.

“The system could only survive by expanding and it could only expand by placing more and more land under the till for the crops that could sustain the system. What happens when you run out of land? The system fails. The biggest problem was the crops themselves. They depleted the soil rapidly and eventually the land was worthless and the slaves were now a financial black hole for their owners as they still cost money to maintain. Arguably, that would be the point where you let them go. That’s what factories did. Unemployed workers went elsewhere for work in general. But to release a slave? Throughout history slaves have had a nasty habit of turning on their masters given a chance.

“The bottom line is, no one will buy a slave if there is a cheaper alternative, be it labor or machine or both. No one will pay for a slave and pay for the slave’s maintenance unless they are likely to make far more from the slave than the cost. If you eliminate the supply, the purchase price certainly goes up and almost always to a point where the demand crashes because the whole notion of a slave economy is cheap labor. Demand and supply go hand-in- hand in order to keep labor cheap for the buyer and profitable to the seller (for the seller

cannot just store his product in a warehouse until the market turns around. His product still costs money to feed, house and keep healthy.)”

“Is it really like the non-magical slave trade,” Dudley asked, “this concubine thing?”

“In many ways, it’s more specialized,” Joshua replied. “The non-magical trade, at least in its last several centuries in the West, focused mainly on minimal skill or unskilled labor. Yes there were slaves who were craftsmen, but they were few and far between mainly because the free craftsmen were not about to put up with that competition in the marketplace.

“The British Concubine practice, well, the women are bought when they are fairly young for the most part. Why would older men – and it is always wizards – why would they want young women, most of whom have not finished school?”

“Sex?” Dudley asked.

Joshua nodded. “Basically. They may have other skills, they may provide other services, but the primary service is sexual in nature. Some are bought as mistresses. Most are bought with the intent of using that – er – talent for the buyer’s benefit in other ways as well such as getting political or other kinds of favor or for money plain and simple. For lack of a better word, the primary market we are dealing with is a sex trade. The overwhelming majority of young women bound as concubines in Britain and practically all initial bondings are for the sexual allure and favors that the young witch can provide, whether it’s just for the buyer alone or not.

“Now, some of the new Concubines might be allowed to learn skills or trades and develop in those as well. Many are not bought with that intent and their skill development of a non-sexual nature pretty much ends as soon as the law allows.”

“When’s that?”

“By the time they take their O.W.L.s,” Harry said. “That’s like the GCSE’s and we take them after Fifth Year. For most, that means their education ends when they are about sixteen.”

“Meaning,” Joshua said, “regardless of ability, they are relegated to unskilled or marginally skilled labor. Their primary value is sexual. While some are used in other roles, such as shop girls, barmaids and the like, they are more valuable economically sexually.”

“Now the problem is their value as such is limited in time. The market prefers young witches. Sooner or later, a witch will lose value to her Master because we all age. If you figure the witch is bound at fifteen for sexual purposes, her ‘career’ in that field might last a dozen years and usually less. And, as she usually has not developed other skills, what happens when she is no longer marketable as a sex toy?

“There is an aftermarket. Older witches are routinely offered for sale and are usually acquired as domestics, although don’t think servants per se. Most of those likely to buy have House Elves which are even cheaper. No, the witches are bought as wet nurses, nannies, child teachers and if they have some magical skills, maybe as tutors for rich magical families.”

“Don’t they have to get pregnant to be wet nurses?” a new voice asked and Dudley saw a new young woman who was introduced as Tabatha, another of Harry’s recent additions.

“There’re spells and potions that can get around that,” Anne Simpson said.

“Now, this after market life can last for decades,” Mr. Simpson continued. “A concubine with a talent for child rearing is a valuable commodity. But it does not follow that every witch bound as a young woman ends up that way when her tenure as a sexual commodity is over. What I have not figured out is what happens to perhaps the majority if not the vast majority of concubines in Britain once they’ve ceased to be valuable as young, attractive women. Even if we assume that many are sold to overseas buyers for whatever reason, I am forced to wonder what happens when they are sixty or older.

That's middle age for a witch," he added for Dudley's benefit, "as she can expect to live beyond one hundred normally."

"We don't know what happens," a new voice said. Dudley looked and saw a lovely blonde whom he knew was one of Harry's. He remembered her name was Daphne. "We can only guess and then only generally," she continued.

"One thing we do know with some certainty is that British concubines generally are stunted," she continued. "By that I mean their bonds are never allowed to mature which is why they must always be bound to a wizard. The immature bond is permanent in character and can only be transferred. But the mature bond, while also permanent, can never be transferred. The mature bond binds witch and wizard for life. She can never be sold, shared, prostituted or abused in any other way for she is magically his wife and he's her husband.

"But the initial bond is not that way at all and can be used for immoral purposes. The origins of the bond are not truly known, or at least the old authorities are contradictory. Some of the journals we've read over the past few weeks suggest it was invented in Britain while others say it came to Britain from outside. What is certain is that it came into use over a thousand years ago when there was a gross disparity between the number of witches and wizards; a disparity that remains two witches per wizard even today, which no one was bothered to study or explain, by the way. There is the supply side of the equation Mr. Simpson mentioned. There are too many witches.

"This gave rise to the bond which at first was used to ensure every witch had a magical 'husband' even if it was not one of her choosing and even if the wizard had more than one 'wife.' The initial bond suppresses free will and expression so the two can live peaceably in the hopes that the bond would mature in time. The problem is that the next stage of maturation is the Love Bond. This is probably an inexact description of what it is, but it requires the witch to choose to remain bound to her wizard of her own free will and for him to accept it. Obviously, if the wizard is a right bastard to her, even assuming he

allows her the 'free will' to choose, she would not, leaving her in a subservient state.

"The social mind set giving rise to the modern state of British Concubines came later. At first it was the rise in stature of the old families, basically the magical aristocracy. Later, the Pureblood philosophy was heaped on top, creating a ruling class with wizards who believe they are all powerful and, given our own self imposed ostracism from the rest of humanity, a belief they were better than other mere mortals, such as Muggles and Muggle Borns. This is the class side of Mr. Simpson's equation and it leads into the demand side.

"If you are of this aristocracy and hold to its self image of superiority, you might as many before you had believe in the need to subjugate the lower classes to the will and domination of your class. The easiest way to do this where there is a glut of witches, themselves a lower class by now in British Magical society, is to enslave 'undesirable' witches. This usually meant Muggle Borns, but included outcasts and those who were deemed either by their families as socially unacceptable and inferior. Clearly, allowing a witch to modify her bond so that she can no longer be your slave would be counter to this philosophy. Some of the old Potter journals suggest there was a deliberate effort by the 'ruling class' to suppress knowledge of the full nature of the bond so that even if a wizard were inclined to elevate his concubines, he would never know it was possible or how to allow it to occur. This is part of the demand side of the equation."

"But that did not happen here," Anne Simpson said.

"No, it did not," a new voice said. It was Astoria. "First of all, there has never been the glut of witches here as in Britain. What records I've read over the last few weeks suggest that aside from importation of concubines - mostly from Britain - there's been near parity. House Potter outlawed the internal trade in witches centuries ago as it was deemed counterproductive and a violation of family, as those who are born here are all ultimately related. But because of 'our' isolation from both Britain and the rest of Europe, new - er - blood and ideas were desirable, hence the importation of concubines not as a slave class,

but as a class of mothers and teachers. The polygamy that exists in magical Britain today is mainly for subjugation. To the extent it has existed here it is for the enhancement and enrichment of society if not through the wives, then through their children.

“The Duke has always had the right to take on concubines and most have. But here, the law has been that one must do so with the hope and intent of achieving the full bond with each woman. In the past, the Duke has also allowed other wizards the same right, subject to the same responsibilities to those women. Often the right was extended to his younger brothers or sons, but occasionally it was extended to others deemed trustworthy and morally upstanding. A concubine was not just an honored member of Charenwell society. If she was bound to a wizard other than the Duke, it was an honor to that wizard as well: an honor and a responsibility, not as in Britain a perceived right. Moreover, while ‘foreign’ concubines were allowed, ‘domestic’ ones were not. Not even the Dukes had the right to sell off their daughters or female wards. To paraphrase one of Lord Harry’s ancestors: if the British feel the need to sell their best and brightest as concubines, who are we not to take advantage for the benefit of our families and country?”

“So,” another said. Dudley saw that this was Hermione and now a large number had gathered to listen, “one might argue our Dukes are a part of the demand side of the equation? We are a part of the Concubine Problem in Britain as much as the bigoted pureblood and aristocratic elite?”

“Not really,” Astoria said. “Prior to Harry, in the last ninety years a total of four concubines have come to this country. Duke Charlus bought Nellie around 1917 and after she died in London during the Muggle War, Minerva in 1943. Duke Charles’s only concubine was Minerva, whom he inherited from Charlus. The other two, Mallory and later Dora, came here with the permission of Duke Charlus when Lord Black was allowed to move here in 1976. In the past, the numbers were greater, but even at a period of what I’d call high importation; at most we were talking a handful per year.”

“Given what we do know of the British trade,” Daphne added, “that’s not even worth mentioning. This year is unlike any in the last five centuries or more. And given that our Harry’s motives are arguably very different than any of his ancestors, this year marks a first in our history.”

“And what are your motives, if I might ask?” Mr. Simpson asked Harry.

“A saving people thing,” Harry shrugged, “that’s what Hermione calls it.”

“When we learned of Dora, Mallory and Minerva,” Hermione said, “and of what could happen if Harry did not take them after inheriting them, we couldn’t very well let them go. With Daphne and Astoria, we were faced with buying them or allowing those who wished them slaves to do so. With the Auction, at first many were our friends, but then Harry came to the opinion that no first time witch was unworthy of rescue. The same thoughts and concerns brought thirty-three witches to us when their owner’s fell into debt, including sixteen wrongfully enslaved by the criminal organization that is the British Magical government.”

“He did it to save us from a hell on this earth,” Daphne said.

“And to punish those who would make that hell possible,” Astoria added.

“How many?” Dudley asked.

“Excuse me?” Astoria replied.

“How many did Harry save? Has he or will be bond with all of them?”

“Thank goodness no,” Harry replied. “Including my consorts, when this summer is over, my family shall have twenty-four witches bound to me. I have twelve concubines right now. I inherited three, got five



from confiscations for unpaid rents, bought three and got another through what's called an honor debt. The ten still to come were all bought at auction last Monday. All told, however, ninety-five concubines either are or will be here by the end of the summer. Lord Longbottom currently has six: one he inherited, one was bought at the Auction and four were a part of the confiscation. He will have eighteen when all is said and done, not including his Consort Susan. Bill Weasley has eight. Two came by way of the Auction and six were part of the confiscations. He will have fifteen all told, plus his Consort Fleur. Bill's brother Fred has eight as well. Two he got when he bought a store in Diagon Alley in London, four were part of the confiscation and two were bought at the Auction. He too will have fifteen, plus his Consort Alicia. Their brother George has seven. He also got two from that store in Diagon Alley; four were from the confiscations and one so far from the Auction. He too will have fifteen and his Consort Angelina. Frank Longbottom and Lord Mayor Lupin each agreed to take in five from the confiscations."

"How many were auctioned?" Anne Simpson asked. "How many were confiscated? How many were Charenwell?"

"All the Charenwell witches save three were confiscations," Harry replied. "The three were with the shop in Diagon Alley. Fifty new witches were at the Auction. I don't know how many – er – used ones."

"About the same," Dora said.

"I don't understand it," Harry said suddenly. "I mean of the fifty, forty-five were Hogwarts students. The other five were from St. George's, St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's. Not one from the other two schools."

"And don't forget, Harry," Hermione added, "when we first learned of it, there weren't nearly that many. Twenty-seven or so were added from Hogwarts after you hit Dumbledore with your demands at the Will reading."

“We can’t say if this year’s auction was typical or not,” Daphne said. “We have no information on past ones. We don’t even know for certain how many new witches are typically sold or by whom. We know the Auction of new witches sells mostly Muggle Borns, but this year seems off for some reason if you assume there’s any kind of logic to it. Logically, there should be numbers from each magical guardian with Muggle Born wards in proportion to their totals. We know St. David’s and Prince Edward’s school are about one third Muggle Born as are the others, yet none were for sale. We know Hogwarts had about half the number of witches regardless of status of the other schools, yet they supplied ninety percent of this year’s market. I can’t tell you why. I can’t even tell you why all of the witches were still in school. Logically, as a magical guardian has an obligation to bind his witches by age twenty-five, there should have been at least some who were finished and had not become Consorts or Wives in Law. Some of those may have had talents from further education beyond what any woman could – er – offer in the bedroom which would have made them more marketable. Instead, we have fifty witches, thirty of whom haven’t even taken their O.W.L.s yet and not one who’s taken their N.E.W.T.s. We don’t know if this year is normal, rare or a first. We can’t even say if fifty is a lot or not.”

“It’s something we want to find out, if we can,” Astoria said.

“The more we know, the more damaging the truth will be,” Luna added.

“As it is, we’re going to realize the largest influx of concubines into Charenwell in over eight hundred years,” Daphne added. “I’d say that’s a blow to Britain, but that assumes they really care. Well, the girls’ families probably do, but not those who sold them and who are part of the system that allows girls like them to be enslaved.”

“Where will they all live?” Mr. Simpson asked.

“My family will live here at the Manor,” Harry replied. “One of the construction projects will be the addition because of the size of the family as we do anticipate children. Lord Longbottom’s family will soon move into the other Manor under construction out front. There’s

a lake about a mile from here around which five more Manors will be built for the other five families. Right now, I am also considering a lot more as I will invite the families of all the women from Britain to live nearby.”

“And not us?” a voice asked. “We’re from Port of Darby and it’s a bit of a trip, you know.”

Harry sighed. “I suppose it would only be right if I extend the invitation to all families. Please let Cissy know if you’re interested so we can plan accordingly.”

“How soon?” another voice asked.

“Well, I suppose today,” Harry replied, “I mean if you’re interested. If you will move, that’s up to you.”

“That’s not what I meant, sorry,” the voice replied. “I’m Rachel Peters. My sister and I were bought at that Auction thing and are with Bill now. How soon before you can reunite us with our families like you did these others?”

“Hopefully not later than mid-September,” Harry said. “And that would include how soon they could move here as the availability of housing is a factor and right now it doesn’t exist.”

“If they’re moving near here,” another voice asked, “what’s all that then on the south coast.”

“Well, as I deplore what Magical Britain has done to their Muggle Borns and as they are the primary supply for concubines, I intend to allow any family with a Muggle Born witch or wizard to relocate here if they want,” Harry replied. “The project on the South Coast is where they will live, although it’s not an exclusive enclave and will be open to anyone. We’re also starting up businesses to generate jobs and such as that city is not intended to be a refugee camp, but a contributing part of this country and our economy. Again, that’ll take time. The moves probably won’t begin until around the same time and will probably go on for some months.”

“Ambitious,” Dudley chuckled. “This and schools too?”

“And much more, Dud,” Harry said. “Her Majesty has asked us to help with the situation in Britain. We’ve already taken and will be taking steps, but a major change in that magical world is necessary and cannot in all probability be brought about soon enough by either financial, political or diplomatic processes. The government and elites that the government protects must be broken and replaced.”

“War?”

Harry nodded. “I’m afraid it will come to that. But that’s much further down the road. As it stands, we need a military and we don’t have one.”

“But you’re planning to get one or make one, right?”

Harry nodded.

“Is it just for magicals, or can anyone serve?”

“This country does not distinguish between magical and not, Big-D,” Harry said. “Should we have an army and such, it should do likewise.”

Dudley nodded. “Tell me when and where to sign up.”

“What?”

“Harry, I owe you more than I can possibly fathom. There’s that and I’m old enough to join the British Army right now, which is about all I can do in all probability as there’s no school coming up and even if there was, I’m not sure my GCSE’s are going to be good enough for prep school. I mean it Harry. I like it here and want to belong.”

“Thanks Dud,” Harry said. “We’re a bit away from that, but you’ll know not long after I do.”

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa Oliver, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
12. Fiona Michelle Simpson, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
6. Lana Catherine Powell, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
9. Christine Celine Paulson, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
4. Annette Lucille Harper, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
5. Deborah Leigh McLean, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*

4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
6. Coleen Harrington, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
9. Caroline Folsom, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).<sup>\*P</sup>
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).<sup>\*</sup>
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SD); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).<sup>\*</sup>
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
7. Eileen O'Malley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle Hanson, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
2. Amelia Renee Carpenter, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).
2. Sandra Ellen Butler, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
5. Marie White, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.



## CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR: TURNING TIME

MONDAY, JULY 22nd, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

It was his third time through Monday when he awoke with Luna and Mallory in his bed and he had to admit that while he was getting a lot more done in a “day” than would have been the case and it seemed this schedule would mean all of his ladies would enjoy far more quality time with him than even a few days before, and not just the sex bits, it was a good thing he had three people keeping him on his schedule. This could easily get confusing.

Monday, Version One began with Hermione and Luna in his bed in the Master’s Chambers. He had seriously considered asking that Laura and Fiona be given the privilege as they had Love Bonded with him, much to his surprise given how reticent they had been up to then. They practically jumped him Sunday evening after the luncheon was over and all the guests had left. Laura made some statement about her father being a little put out she still hadn’t done so. Fiona said it wasn’t real to her until she saw her parents, sisters, brother and more nieces and nephews than names she could remember. They both said they’d probably begin the final step of their bond in the fall, that being becoming the mothers to Harry’s children.

The morning after, breakfast was early as it probably would be for the foreseeable future during the week. The five new witches would not start flight training until next week, once Harry had talked to Mr. Jennings about the status of the “new” Tiger Moths and ground school classes, but he and the others would be in Ground School that morning. Well, Harry thought the Morning of Monday Version Three, the next morning for him. That first Monday Morning, he ate with all of his witches, as the fun of time turning was yet to confuse things. It was also because they would be joined by all the other Harems that morning for the week’s Baby Boom results, as some were already calling it.

The first news from Mallory was that Minerva and Amber were indeed pregnant and their babies were magical and as healthy as could be determined at this early state. Minerva was going to have a daughter probably in early April. The Matriarch, for though a Matron she was

the oldest person there and highly respected by everyone, was in tears when she was told and apologized to Harry for not having a name yet. She didn't want jinx it as this was her dream come true in many ways. Amber was also expecting in early April and she nearly passed out when she was told what she was having. Neville was flabbergasted. Amber was having twins, a boy and a girl. She had already thought of names, but had not told anyone and was glad it was one of each because she only had one boy and one girl name to recommend. So it was that her children would be named Harry James (after Harry as she'd leave a Neville to someone else) and Suzanne Alicia (after Susan and her mother).

There were only four new members to the Baby Boom club. George had his second week in a row of news as Shelly (Parker) Weasley was now expecting. George paled when Shelly's recently rescued sister Georgina announced she expected massive amount of "Georgie Time" 'cause she didn't want her sister to have all the fun. Fred was also having to again think about baby stuff as Danielle (Carter) Weasley was expecting as well. Fred was told that she expected the announcement to be published in that week's Darby Chronicle, the Daily in Port of Darby where her family currently lived. (They were on the list interested in possibly moving to Harry's "family" town.) This prompted Shelly to make the same request of George, as her family was there as well. Bill was on the hook too as Mary (Howard) Weasley was also expecting. The announcements were greeted by vigorous applause from the others, laughs and tears as well. Last, but certainly not least, Hermione was expecting. She practically launched herself at Harry when her name was called and Harry had to admit he felt wonderful all day afterward.

The good news made Harry change dinner plans from then on during his time turned days. He would dine that night out of the Manor with Hermione and Minerva, the two who he would sleep with later. On Version Two evenings, he would take out Luna and the witch who would be sleeping with them. On his final Monday nights, unless it was a birthday, he would dine with the rest of the family.

First Monday was to be spent on his Duke and Lord duties and his primary assistant would be Cissy. Promptly at nine, Cissy presented him with the six titles to the six witches from last week's Auction who

would be brought in that day. Harry found that a little amusing, seeing as for him the bonding would occur the afternoon of his third Monday so that from now until then a part of him would be wondering how it went and his girls had to keep their mouths shut about it, unless there was an absolute and immediate need for him to know something before his Third Monday.

The afternoon schedule had to take into account that on what would be his third Monday afternoon, the next group of witches would be arriving for their bonding. He also had to remember that while he got three Monday's, for now his witches only had one, thus to include the five witches in his morning plans on this first Monday would mean he could include not the witches in his other Monday mornings. Minerva and Mallory had their work today with the new arrivals, after all, and the other seven would be at the Base.

So his first Monday morning, as he was scheduled to go to Jamestown to see the work and talk with the supervisors, he took Laura and Karen with him as they were from the area. They had lunch together at Martha's, which he needed to remember so that he didn't show up at the same place for lunch before Tuesday.

Monday afternoon, none of his witches were with him after lunch as for them there was the bonding. Cissy and he spent the afternoon inspecting the construction on the main estate and the site at the lake where the Weasley Manors were just breaking ground. He also had a chance to speak with the supervisor of that project (and the hotel already well underway) about two new houses and his plans for a town between the lake and the entry drive. He scheduled a meeting for the next "real" morning to begin talking details. He spent the remainder of the afternoon adding up figures from Daphne and Astoria's research into the families from Britain and the lists from the day before.

Assuming all the British families relocated, he would need 166 additional homes for this town for an additional 590 people. Each home would have a separate family. He also knew that if the "harems" were included, this new town would have 700 people by mid to late September. It would be larger than Potter's Vineyard from its outset. What staggered him were the number of children. Including

the witches in the Harem's, there looked like there would be 116 children who were in magical schools, 70 in primary school including five year olds, and a staggering 137 under the age of five (and not including any from the Baby Boom.) At the very least, this meant he had to think about shops and a primary school as part of this new town.

The morning after his Duke Day, he awoke and had breakfast with Hermione and Minerva in his sitting room. For them it was Tuesday, but as soon as they left to begin their Tuesday, he used his Time Turner to begin Monday again. This time, once he was dressed he was off to R.A.F. Pottersport for his day of flight training. He had lunch at the base with his seven flying witches. That afternoon was spent flying and going over the beginnings of the Air Force. Six new Tiger Moths were on the flight line and another six were expected by the end of the week. Mr. Jennings assured him that the training could handle another large group beginning next Monday.

Harry met Luna and Dora in Pottersport for dinner. He did not know if he had already bound with his new witch or if that was after dinner and he did not ask. He had to admit, he was beginning to like this time with his girls even if it did not lead directly to bare naked bodies. He spent that evening in a sitting room going down a list he made. On Monday one, he had naked time with Hermione, Minerva, Laura, Karen and Mallory. Today he added or would add Luna, Mallory, Daphne, Astoria and Tabatha. That meant on Monday three he needed to have time for Fiona, Rhonda, Stacey, Ginny and his new girl. He then realized he already made a minor temporal mistake. Karen was to be the cross-bonder, which meant she'd get double Harry time. Oh well, Harry thought.

On the final Monday which began after he had breakfast with Luna and Dora in the Mistress's Sitting Room, he now realized he did not have to worry about temporal anomalies aside from perhaps bumping into himself, but as that had not happened, he knew it would not – at least not today. In the morning, he invited Tabatha, Fiona and Rhonda to join him for his magical training session which was in the Gym in the buildings just behind the Manor. Alice and Frank Longbottom were there with a few other witches from other families as well. The former Aurors would be supervising the session. It was

exhausting and it was a good thing he had a little time to relax with his witches before, as he thought of it, the three timelines converged and all his witches were together again. And damn it if there wasn't another anomaly as that meant he had Tabatha time twice as well. Well, she didn't complain yesterday evening so Harry guessed she had no problem.

Lunch was in the Family Dining Room and Cissy, He remembered now that Cissy had spent her Monday morning going over the planning for the meeting with the Prime Minister and his people later in the week with Remus at Government House when Harry was off in Jamestown. He also had to shake his head remembering that at this moment, he was having lunch with most of his other women somewhere else. Thinking about it, he realized that only Mallory and Minerva were dining somewhere without him. He then decided it was best not to think of such things otherwise he might go 'round the twist.

Katie Bell's morning began quite normally. She was home for the summer with her family near Nottingham. Her parents were Muggles. Her father was a pharmacist and worked at a clinic in town and her mother taught primary school. As it was the summer, her mother had little to do aside from keep an eye on her three, magical children. Katie was the oldest and was set to begin her final year at Hogwarts in the fall. Her brother Justin had finished his Third Year at Hogwarts and, much to Katie's sometime dismay, had not done her any favors by being sorted into Gryffindor three years earlier. Justin might be her brother, but he could still be a pain. The youngest was Laura, who was eleven had had received her Hogwarts letter only days after Katie returned from school.

Katie had been worried all summer about what was happening in the magical world. She had not taken a subscription to a magical newspaper, which might have told her what was going on. The truth was they were hardly known for printing the truth where lies served their sponsor's more readily as Katie had observed over the past couple of years, so what was the point? Besides, as worried as she was about the return of You-Know-Who and his vile minions, she felt somewhat safe in the Muggle world and saw no reason to worry her parents about things they could not control and might not understand. What good news there was, was that now that she was seventeen,

she was free to do magic outside of school and she had learned loads about Defense this past year thanks to her friends and her teammate Harry Potter. She figured she could get her family out of trouble if need be.

Today she was going to Diagon Alley. Two of her friends lived there now, or so they told her soon after she had returned home from Hogwarts. Alicia and Angelina had been on the Quidditch Team with her through this last year and were now finished with Hogwarts. In their last letter, they said they had “hooked up” with Fred and George Weasley and were living in a flat above a shop that the two pranksters were planning to open soon. Katie had not had a chance to go before today and as her friends were apparently living with the boys, was not certain her parents would be enthusiastic with a visit later in the Summer when they took her and the others shopping for school supplies. Fortunately, Katie could apparate as London was a full day trip by Muggle means from where they lived. It was also an excuse to take her wand and given the times, not having a wand was not a smart thing.

She left at eight in the morning, which seemed like a good time as while stores would probably be open, most shoppers arrived later so she would have time to spend with her friends. She had no idea if Alicia or Angelina were also working with their boyfriends, but figured that was probably a safe bet. She apparated from her family garage to an alley a block away from the Leaky Cauldron on Charing Cross Road in London. The Alley was said to be a safe place to arrive as the only Muggles who might be there were drunks and no one would believe them should they say they saw someone appear out of thin air. Fortunately the alley, while smelly and filthy, was also quite devoid of humans, although Katie would not be surprised if there were rats. She quickly walked to the main sidewalk and headed to the Leaky Cauldron.

The tavern was all but empty. Tom the Barman was sitting at a table reading a paper. The usually friendly owner looked up momentarily and then returned to his paper. Katie found that odd as he was usually a very outgoing sort. Maybe it was the hour. She walked into the alley behind the tavern and tapped a pattern on the brick wall. Even after seven years, watching the bricks rearrange themselves

from a wall into an arch never lost its wonder. She smiled as she stepped through into Diagon Alley.

She had never seen the Alley so empty and depressing. It was almost as if everyone had left, and the number of closed up shops stunned her. She had never seen a closed up shop here before, windows boarded up and doors blocked. Ollivander's shop was a wreck. All the windows seemed to be broken and the door busted in. She glanced through the window and saw the shelves were empty. Katie wondered where her sister would get her wand if Ollivander was gone. Florean Fortesque's Ice Cream Shop was also abandoned. Some stores she knew looked like they were still in business, but it was hard to tell because in place of boards, the windows were plastered with handbills warning about Death Eaters and "Wanted" Posters. The office of the Daily Prophet was slightly different as the last day's Front Page was on display amid the handbills. The Headline was calling for the removal of Dumbledore as Headmaster. Katie snorted. The Alley looked abandoned and that damned paper is still on about Dumbledore. But there was another article that caught her attention:

MINISTRY      ANNOUNCES      MANDATORY      CONCUBINE  
REGISTRATION

All Wizards In Possession of Any Concubine Must Register  
Themselves And Their Property With The Department For  
Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures By August 15th  
or Be Subject To Highest Fines on Record.

Katie was curious and as no one seemed to be looking, she nicked a copy and stuffed it into her purse, which fortunately was magically expanded on the inside. She'd read it later, but wondered what it was about. She knew what the Muggle word "Concubine" meant sort of. It was a sex slave or something similar. But she wondered what this was about. She's never heard of a magical creature called a Concubine.

She finally reached her destination. It was Number 97, Diagon Alley. It too looked abandoned and the front door was ajar. There were no signs whatsoever to suggest there was a shop here and she could

not remember what shop had been here in the past. She stepped inside and saw it was empty. The barren shelves and floor were covered in a fine layer of dust.

“Hello?” she asked, pulling her wand.

It was at that moment something happened. The depressingly empty shop seemed to dissolve before her eyes and she soon found herself standing in a huge, ornate space that reminded her of a fancy hotel lobby. For a moment it was empty. Then two more figures appeared before her without a sound.

She recognized the taller one. The blonde haired girl was named Hannah Abbott and although Hannah was a year younger and from a different House, Hannah had been part of the D.A. last year.

“Katie?” Hannah asked.

Before Katie could answer, three more girls appeared one by one. She recognized them, but the only one she knew was Annette Barnes who was from Gryffindor and two years behind her, the same year as one of her other teammates Ginny Weasley.

“Where are we?” another girl asked.

Katie first decided to find out who they all were. The girl who seemed to be with Hannah was named Patti and was Hannah’s younger sister. Patti had finished her Third Year in Hufflepuff. The darker haired girl was Mandy Brocklehurst from Ravenclaw and one of the former Fifth Years who was not in the D.A. The last girl was Tammy Grey, another former Fourth Year and like Hannah and her sister she was also a Hufflepuff. Two of the girls looked like they had been getting dressed and the Abbott sisters were still in their bed clothes.

Two women soon entered without magic. One was definitely older than the other, although they both looked older than the six confused witches.



“My name is Mallory,” the older one said, “and this is Roberta. “As it’s obvious some of you are in a state of undress, we have robes for the lot of you. When your name is called, please raise your hand. Hannah Abbott?”

Hannah raised her hand and was handed a silken robe with the letter “N” over the left breast. She was instructed to wear it over her bedclothes. Pattie was next and received identical robes. Annette Barnes received a different colored robe from the Abbott sisters with the letter “F” on it. She was half dressed or more like mostly naked with just a pair of knickers and her bra and eagerly put on her new garment. Katie’s robe was a different color altogether and had a letter “H” on it. Despite being dressed, she was asked to wear the robe. Mandy received yet another color with the letter “B.” She too was only in her underwear and did not hesitate to cover up. Last, Tammy Grey received a fifth color robe with the letter “G” and put it on. Roberta told her that she would be Tammy’s escort for the morning. Everyone wondered what that meant.

“Okay then,” Roberta said, “any of you have your wands on you?”

Katie nodded and noticed she was the only one. Roberta looked at the other woman. “No worries, the rest of you,” she said and left them.

The six witches in robes were then led to a sitting room where finally there was an adult they recognized.

“Professor McGonagall?” several voices asked.

Minerva McGonagall had been teaching for practically fifty years. She began the fall following the end of her final year at Hogwarts at primary school here in Charenwell while she worked on her Mastery in Transfiguration. For the last forty years she taught Transfiguration at Hogwarts. She thought of herself as a good teacher, and most all of her former students whether they had her years ago in primary school or later at Hogwarts would agree. But the last few hours was, in her opinion, the most important lesson she had ever given to any of the thousands of students in her long career.

It was only her third time giving that lecture. The first had been a week ago. That had been a small “class” of eight young women ranging in age from twenty to fourteen. The twenty-year old, Penelope (Clearwater) Longbottom, at least had a good idea about the subject of the lesson, which helped with the others. The day after, she gave a similar lesson to thirty young women. At least they were young to her. They ranged in age from sixteen to twenty-five. Unlike her first “class,” all of them were very familiar with the subject matter.

Today, arguably, was her most difficult class. There were only six young witches ranging in age from fourteen to seventeen, but this was a group where none of them had any idea about the subject matter. She had to tell these young women about the truth of being a witch, something she was forbidden to teach at Hogwarts. She had to tell them about Consorts and Concubines and the social status of witches in general and Concubines in particular in Magical Britain. And then she had to tell these poor girls that their Magical Guardian had sold them off as Concubines.

In preparing for this lesson, she had spoken at length with the Muggle Borns and Muggle raised in this new world. There were not many prior to the Auction. Basically, she spoke at length with Harry, Hermione, Mallory, Stacey, Alicia and Angelina and with Mary (Howard) who was with Bill and Ellen (North) who was with George. They had all been Muggle Raised and she wanted their first impressions of the magical world.

It was these impressions, she knew, that were significant to most all Muggle Borns. The realization that magic was real and they were magical soon became a sense of hope and wonder (at least to everyone not named “Harry Potter,” but having a psychotic Dark Lord obsessing over one’s murder tends to put a damper on things.) There was a sense that the fairy tales and fantasies of their childhoods were real and could be for them. It was somewhat disturbing as most childhood fairy tales were very dark indeed. “And they lived happily ever after” seemed to be a common ending for the Muggles, but given the hell the hero and heroine had to go through to get there, it was little wonder why. The truth was the magical world was every bit as dark as their former world and in the present far less hopeful. The

dreams of youth never measured up to the reality of adulthood, and the disparity was even greater in the Magical world in many ways.

It was hard to destroy a person to build them anew. In essence this was what she was doing. Every hope and dream these young women had before they arrived had to be replaced with hopes and dreams that they could achieve in this new life. The truth was they were the lucky ones. It was hard to convince a young teenage girl who would soon lose her virginity against her will and be bound to a wizard she might not even know or at best barely know that her life could actually be better than it might have been otherwise, but Minerva had to get them to start to think along those lines. The sooner they thought that way, the sooner they would accept their new life and move forward with their bonds.

But she was not so naïve as to believe she could accomplish this in a brief few hours. Most of the Muggle Borns from last week had yet to take the next step. Penelope had, but then again so had almost every woman for whom the Concubine Bond was not new. Of the newly bound, only Harry's Tabatha had taken that leap of faith so far. One of the points of this lesson was to encourage that leap. Minerva hoped the girls left here open to the idea of one day allowing their bond to mature to its fullest potential and she believed it helped that there were Concubines in all the Houses who were doing so. Over time, as they talked with their "sisters" they would see how lucky they truly were and how each of their wizards were looking out for them.

That was the other point to the lesson. These girls were destined to be Concubines if not from birth, then certainly from the moment their magical guardian saw fit to sell them off. They were never told how to avoid this fate and the truth was it was difficult for a young witch to avoid it. Hermione had been lucky in more ways than one. Susan and Luna were lucky to become Consorts as well. Angelina and Alicia were lucky that Dumbledore had not seen fit to sell them sooner (perhaps the Old Man was more interested in the Gryffindor Quidditch Team than lining his pockets at the moment, which was arguably why Katie had not been on the block last summer as well), but it was also now known the two girls' time had run out as they were on one of the original lists for this summer's auction. Only the Consort Bond had saved them from being in the same place. Arguably, it was the

Consort Bond between Harry and Hermione that had saved all of them. She never said it, but Minerva was convinced that without Hermione, Harry would never have gone down this road to the same extent. He might very well have kept his inheritance and probably considered the Greengrass sisters, but Minerva was not certain he would have taken any others.

From Dora, Minerva learned that even in a fairly benign Concubine relationship, the witch could still harbor resentments against her wizard that would prevent the Bond from maturing. It had delayed it in Minerva's case, but she had long thought it was due to her youth. Seeing how quickly some of the young witches had taken the next step, she now agreed with Dora that ignorance of the whole truth (on the part of both witch and wizard) had a lot to do with their past circumstances. If the witch blamed her Binder in any way for what she has become, the Bond might never mature.

Thus, an important part of this lesson was to help them see that their wizard was not the one to blame and for them to keep an open mind in regards to him, his family, and their relationship and to see the possibilities that are there and not dwell on what might have been. The Bond was never meant to be evil. Wizards made it that way over time. The evil was the society that allowed this to occur and the magical guardians that saw them as cattle that sold them without a second thought. The wizards here were not doing this because they wanted to or needed to for themselves. They had Consorts and did not need others. These wizards were doing it for the witches. Every witch deserved a full life and these wizards knew that the girls they were bringing into their families would not have a full life otherwise and might well die miserable and all too young.

Minerva looked at the six faces before her. The two Gryffindors were doing their best to put on a brave face, although it was clear that this was difficult. The others made no such pretensions as silent tears streaked their faces and the occasional sniffles were heard.

"There is hope," Minerva said. "You might not yet see it, but it is there. The young men whom you are joining are that hope. They will offer you a life of hope and promises fulfilled if you only let them."

“They’ll free us?” Hannah asked.

“In a way,” Minerva said. “When the Bond is complete, they will still be your husband and you their wives and that bond will be for life, but you will be more free than you could have reasonably been as a witch in Britain.”

“And how do you know this?” Mandy shot out.

“You mean aside from the fact that one of the Wizard’s is my husband and I am his Concubine?” Minerva replied.

There were several gasps as she had not revealed that information before. She thought it was more dramatic later than up front.

“So one of us get’s an old man?” Katie said with some disgust. “Probably all of us? And we should be grateful?”

“My husband is about your age, Katie,” Minerva said. “He’s the youngest of the wizards. The oldest wizard is twenty-five.”

“So young? How long have you been a .... a ....?”

“I was younger than you, Katie, when I was first bound to my husband’s Great-Grandfather. I Love Bonded with him after a time, but we never had children. I bonded with my current husband as Concubine less than a month ago. I Love Bonded with him within days, not years. And now, I will bear my Husband’s daughter sometime around the beginning of April and should I again wish for a child and be able to bear one, he will allow it. He was under no obligation to either keep me or allow me anything, and yet he has allowed me all I could hope for and more. He and the others find our society as repugnant as you very well may now. They offer you a life because you deserve it. The others would have it stolen from you. They stepped in to see it restored. And, if you are concerned about whether they will truly love and care for you, don’t be. You will find that they do and will.

“To be here means you will all be able to Love Bond with your wizard should you wish it. If you have taken your O.W.L.s and desire a child, you shall have one. You shall have as many or as few as you desire. Even if you have not yet taken your O.W.L.s, that option is not foreclosed, but the family will decide whether to allow you to become pregnant then or wait until the O.W.L.s when permission is your right. You will be expected to continue your education through N.E.W.T. levels and will be allowed to continue beyond, if you wish it.”

“And what about our families?” Katie asked.

“All will be invited to move here to be near you,” Minerva said. “I can’t promise that they’ll accept the invitation, but it is not the intent of our wizards to destroy families. Hannah and Pattie are sisters. They are one of nine or so sets of sisters who either are or will be here and like all of the others, they will be a part of the same family. Hopefully, within two months and should they accept the invitation, your families will be here as well and living probably within walking distance from where you will be living.”

“Who are our Wizards?” Mandy asked.

“You shall find out soon,” Minerva replied. “It has become our custom not to reveal that until it needs to be revealed. I believe at least some of you, if not all of you will be pleasantly surprised.”

At lunch, Katie and the others were introduced to their guides. Tammy Grey had already met the twenty-five year old witch named Roberta who was to be her guide and she asked what the guide was for. They were told that each would lead them to where they needed to be to meet their new families. Annette Barnes’s guide was a twenty-three year old witch named Coleen Harrington. Mandy’s was a twenty-two year old witch named Lana Powell. Hannah and Pattie, as they were destined to remain sisters, had but one guide named Annette Harper. She was twenty-four. The four witches had all been “rescued” from prior owners who were typical for British wizards. While they did not go into detail, they talked about their lives before as slaves bound to their Master’s will and condemned to a life whose

value was measured in the quality of their ability as sexual entertainers. Minerva, it seemed had been lucky to avoid that fate.

Katie's guide was named Mallory. She was thirty-nine and had started her life as a concubine in much the same way as the others. But early on, her first Master had been forced to sell her and she had been fortunate to find a new wizard who, in time, saw greater value in her as a person. She would eventually become that wizard's Wife-In-All-But-Law, and was encouraged to continue her education. As a Concubine she became a Healer and eventually went on to Muggle University and became a Doctor. It was obvious why these witches were here, Katie thought. One reason was to describe the life they might have led had whomever these wizards were not intervened, and the other was the life they could aspire to now that fate had moved in this direction.

Mallory's first "husband" was unable to have children and had died only recently. Without a child, she remained a concubine and could be sold at the whim of whatever wizard gained control over her person. Her new Husband had inherited her, allowed her to Love Bond within days, and she was now expecting a son by him. No one knew for certain when the final stage of the Bond took hold, she said. Was it upon conception or birth of their child? But it would take hold, and while she would remain bound to him for the rest of her life, she would be equal in all things and her stature would be practically that of Consort.

"Although," she admitted, "not his exclusive one. To date, he has two Consorts and twelve Love Bound Concubines, three of whom are pregnant. But that does not matter to us. Here, we are as free as we can be and what limitations are placed upon us are our own. The only sacrifice that remains is he will be our last, and in most cases only wizard. Believe me, that's no sacrifice at all!"

"With that many, I guess it's easy to be left alone," Mandy said.

"That's not what she meant," one of the other guides said. "We have all learned how wonderful not being left alone can be. Keep your mind and heart open, and your bonding can be wonderful."

“Our wizards neither demand nor ask for sex from us,” another said. “We ask it of them.”

“And they are usually most obliging,” a third said.

“Unless they are totally knackered,” another said. “Then you might have to wait until morning. But it’s worth the wait.”

“As the Consorts can tell you of similar – er – physical enjoyment,” Minerva said, “we are now of the opinion that the maturing bond has as much to do with our enjoyment and even eager anticipation of physical intimacy as any – er – talent he might have in that regard. You are advised not to let it go too much to your heads, although our recent history shows that warning is always unheeded.”

Mallory chuckled. “Even the ones who have not yet Love Bonded – er – over did it their first times. And none of the wizards will demand intimacy from you once you’re bonded so if you over do it – and at least a few of you will – you have no one to blame but yourselves.”

“So we just don’t do it after we’re bound,” Mandy said.

“If you manage such self control,” Minerva said, “you would be the first.”

“I find that hard to believe.”

“As have a few others who were complaining the next morning,” Mallory said. “We don’t know why, but experience shows you will become as randy as he lets you. And all five don’t put any limits on your desires in that regard. The only limit is you’re not the only one and they try to treat all of you equal after your first day.”

“How many others?” Katie asked.

“Katie,” Minerva said, “the family you’re joining is and will remain the largest. It is the only one with two Consorts and as of right now, it has



twelve Love Bound Concubines. When this summer is over, there will be twenty-two.”

“Guess that means not a lot of sex,” she said gratefully.

“Don’t be so sure,” Mallory giggled. “There is a schedule of sorts and it means you’ll sleep with him about once a week and you’ll be able to have sex with him every day.”

“He can do it twenty-four times in a day?” Hannah asked.

“We finally wore him out once at something like thirty-five times. Actually, there is a trick to his schedule you’ll learn later, Katie.”

“And your wizard is apparently no slouch either, Hannah,” Minerva said. “We don’t compare those kinds of notes, but his Consort and eight Concubines seem to have no complaints about either ability or frequency.”

“Except that you can over do it,” Annette Harper said with a slight giggle.

“Nine witches?” Pattie Abbott gasped. “Eleven including us?”

“And nineteen eventually,” Minerva said. “You two and Katie are arguably the unlucky ones in that regard. The rest of these young ladies families, while they currently are the same size as your future wizard’s house, will top out at sixteen.”

“Are there any witches left in Britain?” Hannah asked more as a joke than anything.

“Funny you should state it that way,” Minerva said. “You all are from Hogwarts. For most of you, that meant Dumbledore is the man who sold you. Of the fifty young witches sold into bondage this summer, forty-five were from Hogwarts. Along with you, seven others have also become Consorts of Concubines that we know of.”

“And what does that mean?” Mandy asked.

“It means those seven and you fifty are all here or going to be here and are or will be part of one of the five families represented by the five initials you see on your robes. Every year at Hogwarts has at least one witch who is or will be here aside from the incoming First Years and every House at least five. Hufflepuff is losing the most. And the sixth year is losing the most. When the Hogwarts Express departs King’s Cross this September First, there will be no Muggle Born witches at Hogwarts above Second Year aboard and of the eighteen witches who took their O.W.L.s recently, only six will be returning: three Slytherins, two Hufflepuffs, one Ravenclaw and no Gryffindors.”

“Four of the five wizards were at Hogwarts last year,” Mallory said. “They say they now have all the good looking witches; certainly all the good looking rising Sixth Years. Personally I find that a little hard to believe, but it’s what they say.”

“Who else?” Hannah asked. “I mean we know Hermione Granger, Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil are on your list as you said there are no more Gryffindors in my year, and I’d guess Padma’s on it as well. But who else? Is Susan on it?”

“We’d be best not to speculate,” Minerva said. “You will all find out for certain very soon.”

Somehow, the thought that Hermione was involved made Katie feel a little better about the situation.

Mandy Brocklehurst stood in a large, elegant room. She was told it was the main room of a large guest house where she and her new family lived for now until their permanent house was finished. She looked around. For now she was the only person standing in the room. Seated around her were her soon to be “husband’s” other “wives.” The only one she recognized for certain was Fleur Delacour, the Tri-wizard Champion from Beaubatons in France who was apparently her “wizard’s” Consort. There were two others she had seen before. One was Peggy Nolan who was a year ahead of her in

Hufflepuff and the other was Peggy's younger sister Beth who was two years behind her in Gryffindor. Lana had been her escort, and the three other witches were named Carla, Donna and Christine and like Lana were both older than her and had never attended Hogwarts. Given that Fleur was Consort, Mandy feared the wizard might be Roger Davies who had been Fleur's date to the Yule Ball a year and a half ago. Roger had been a year ahead of her in Ravenclaw and Mandy couldn't stand him at all.

A tall, red haired man entered the room. It was definitely not Davies. He smiled at her and it was not what she expected. She expected some kind of feral or greedy or perhaps dirty minded grin. What she saw was more warm and welcoming and she could not help but blush and smile back.

"You must be Mandy," he said in a very nice voice she thought. She nodded in reply.

"I'm Bill Weasley and yes Fred and George are my brothers and I was Head Boy, but I'm told I was not the stuck up bastard my other brother Percy seems to have been."

"Or the Dork Ronald is," Fleur said darkly.

Bill shrugged. "I swear my Mum must have played around a bit. Those two sure as heck didn't get their attitudes from Dad and as they were married and not bonded she could have had a dalliance or two. But that's neither here nor there. Is Mandy short for Amanda?"

"No," Mandy said.

"Oh, you're in so much trouble," Peggy Nolan said.

"Oh?"

"He likes to – er – play a song after," Peggy's sister said. "Something for you. How he found that sappy song is beyond me."

“You’re just complaining ‘cause you don’t like Buddy Holly,” Bill chuckled. “And I did apologize. They should have stamped ‘I don’t like Buddy Holly’ somewhere.”

“What song?” Mandy asked. “Not ‘Mandy’?”

“Don’t tell me you don’t like it,” Bill moaned.

“Oh, it’s not that,” she said. “My Mum did. It’s how I got my name.”

“You won’t mind then?”

Mandy shrugged. For all practical purposes, he was going to have his way with her anyway. She was trying to keep an open mind, but it was not easy. Maybe that would help. Before she knew it, he had recited the oath and told her to undress. She undid the sash on her robe and let it fall open and drop from her shoulders.

“Not again,” Bill said as she began pulling down her knickers, “I swear there’s some sort of conspiracy! Every one of my girls came here naked or close to it beneath their robes!”

“We were in bathing suits,” Beth Nolan protested. “And it’s not like anyone warned us it was a bad time for sun bathing!”

“I’m just saying,” Bill replied, now looking over Mandy who stood naked before him and the others. “You look amazing, by the way,” he added as he walked over to Mandy and took her in his very powerful arms almost melting her with his kiss.

Hannah and Pattie found themselves following Annette down a wide, well groomed bridle path through some woods. They knew it was a horse path because they could see the shod prints in the fine dirt. Annette had also told them this was where their Wizard and his Ladies went riding, at least those of them who knew how. She didn’t, at least not yet. Their wizard had arranged lessons for his Ladies who could not “sit a horse” because he apparently liked riding with his ladies. Annette quipped he also liked riding his ladies, but preferred to do that without horses.

“Either of you ride horses?” Annette asked.

“No,” Hannah said.

“Well, don’t fret. It seems a few of us don’t, at least not yet.”

“Where are we going?” Pattie asked.

“This path leads to the lake,” Annette answered, “or at least a lake. But it’s our lake and along it is our tree.”

“Excuse me?”

“It’s where we all bonded with him,” she said. “It really is a lovely place. It’s very special, you’ll see.”

“Who is this wizard?” Hannah asked. “Do we even know him?”

“Ah Ah! That would spoil the surprise,” Annette chimed.

They soon left the wood and before them was a large lake with sunlight glinting off the ripples. They saw up ahead a large oak tree near the shore, standing apart from the rest of the wood and there were three people gathered around it. They arrived and saw the people were all young women. They were introduced to these other members of their new “family.” They recognized the former Head Girl from Ravenclaw Penelope Clearwater. Debbie was another and was twenty, the same age as Penelope. The third was an eighteen year old witch named Miriam.

“We were sent on ahead,” Penelope said. “The others are going to ride.”

“This is where...?” Hannah started.

Penelope nodded. “It’s a powerfully magical place,” she said. “Quite beautiful and peaceful too.”

There was that, Hannah thought to herself.

“But outside?”

“Our husband bound all of to him right here,” Penelope said. “Well, all of us aside from his Consort. He bonded with her at a very similar place back in England where, apparently, his father and grandfather and so on bonded with their consorts and concubines for eight or nine generations. He picked this place because it’s almost just like that place. Now, if you must know, his parents are here as well. The war back home brought us all here in a way. Not right now, of course, but they live nearby. And because there are so many of us in need of good homes, his parents agreed to take a few of us in. They used this tree as well. Of course, not when we were around. They say that bonding in one place actually makes the bonding – er – better somehow. I think it’s true ‘cause although he was not my first, I thought it was wonderful!”

“We’re supposed to,” Pattie hesitated, “to have sex with him here?”

“We all have,” Penelope said. “And by all that includes his Consort.”

“And where will you be?” Hannah asked.

“Here,” Annette said.

“Watching?” Pattie gasped in shock.

“We all were bound this way,” Penelope said. “His Consort was the only one to bind with him alone but then again she was his first. However, his second was Amber and he made love to his Consort here, beneath this tree as Amber watched before bonding with her. It’s actually kind of nice.”

“Nice?!” the two girls exclaimed.

“It’s you, your wizard – who’s wonderful by the way – and your new sisters. It’s very intimate and it felt ... safe. It felt right. You’ll see.”

“Sex in front of others?” Pattie asked in horror.

“Have you had girl sex?” Miriam asked.

Pattie nodded. She had it since the beginning of last year.

“Do you do that in private?”

“Er ... no. But they’re no boys around!” she added hastily.

“Have you ever done it in private?”

“Um ... well my sister and I ...”

“So, having girl sex in a room full of girls is okay, even if there are some who are not into it or who you would not accept as a partner and doing it with your sister is okay, but this is not? How is this any different? You’ve met us. Are you saying if this was the girls’ loos or dorms you’d not have girl sex because we are around and might see?”

Pattie said nothing.

“Were you alone with your partner when you first had girl sex?” Miriam asked softly.

Pattie shook her head. “My other roommates were there.”

“And how soon after your first time were you doing it in the bathroom in front of any girl?”

“The next day.”

“And you?” she asked Hannah.

“My first time was in the girl’s bathroom,” Hannah confessed. She and Susan thought it would be easier there.

“In some ways, it’s just like that,” Penelope said. “Think of it like that, yet with a different partner and it’s less ... embarrassing. Besides, it won’t be just you two, you know.”

“He’s bonding with others?” Pattie asked.

“Not today,” Penelope giggled, “but the rest of us do hope to have our turn with him as well and we don’t care if you two watch at all.”

The sound of hoof beats startled the sisters and they turned to see who was approaching. There were two riders, both women. They dismounted just before reaching the group and allowed the horses to wander. One was an older witch named Amber who the sister’s learned was their Wizard’s first Concubine. She was thirty-three and had known the wizard practically from the day he was born. The other was Amanda Kennedy who was Hannah’s age and made sure the sisters knew they were going to enjoy this.

“Where are the others?” Annette asked.

“Oh, they decided to have a pre-bonding quickie in the stables. They should be along,” Amanda replied.

“Here they come,” Miriam said.

Hannah could not believe her eyes. There upon two horses were the young man she was supposed to lose her virginity to, regardless as to whether that was what she wanted, and his Consort. She was to do it here, in the open, under this tree, in front of all these women and her sister and the Consort. She knew them both. The Consort was her best friend Susan and the young man was Neville Longbottom.

Her first girl sex time was with Susan. Now her first real time would be with Susan there. Hannah made up her mind right then.

“Pattie,” she said, “I’ll go first.”



Katie Bell found herself somewhere else in what she now knew was a huge manor of some kind. This room was a library and quite possibly the largest one she'd ever seen. Mallory had brought her there following lunch and told her to wait until the others arrived. Katie thought about her options. She could run. She still had her wand so she could fight. She did not have to do this. But the harder she tried to convince herself to find some way out of this, the less her body wanted to help her. She was now standing still, facing a large fireplace and she now bothered to see the picture hanging over it.

It looked like a color photograph, but it was not a magical one as the figures did not move. She recognized one immediately. In the center with women on either side of him was Harry Potter, dressed far better than Katie had ever remembered seeing him. He looked like a million pounds in that dinner jacket and white bow tie and had what looked like a Knight's sash under the open jacket. To his right stood a beautiful young woman wearing a deep blue dress and a similar sash and more diamonds than Katie had ever seen. The brown haired woman looked very familiar, yet very different.

"It really is a nice photo, isn't it?" a voice asked.

Katie turned around and saw a familiar face, although not one she expected. It was Ginny Weasley. Ginny was wearing a short silk robe and matching slippers. Katie turned and looked at the photo again and saw a much more elegant version of Ginny with a sash and lighter blue dress, and again more diamonds than anyone she had known had ever worn, seated just in front and almost in between Harry and the young woman in the deep blue gown.

"That's you?" Katie asked pointing to the red haired girl who was smiling in the picture.

"It is," Ginny said. "It was taken last week at the State Dinner for Her Majesty the Queen and the Investiture of the Countess of Darby and the newest Knights of the Order of the Round Table. That's the sash you see us wearing."

“The Queen? Not the Queen of Britain?”

“Well, she’s the only one I met. Are there others?”

“And the others?” Katie asked.

“Those of us in blue are House Potter. Hermione is the Consort and Duchess of Charenwell.”

“What? Duchess? How? Where?” Katie stammered.

“Well, given that Harry Potter is the Duke of Charenwell, naturally his Potter wife and Consort would be his Duchess.”

“What’s Charenwell?”

“It’s an independent magical country,” Ginny said. “It’s an island actually a few hundred miles out in the ocean from Britain. House Potter’s lived here since the Eight Century and it gained its independence from both Magical and Non-Magical Britain in the Thirteenth Century, which was when Lord Potter became the Duke.”

“So Harry’s the ruler?”

“Not really,” Ginny said. “According to our research, the Duke never ruled directly. Even when we gained our independence, the Duke left the governing of his people to an elected council of respected people and a Lord Mayor. He still has a large say in government seeing as he owns most all of the land. But basically he merely has final say on when and how land is developed. Otherwise he has to convince the government and people to do things.”

“Harry never acted like a prince,” Katie began.

“He’s not a prince and never has been,” Ginny said. “At most, until this summer he was Heir Apparent, although he only learned the weekend we left Hogwarts. Before then he had no idea about any of this.”

“Now the rest of House Potter includes me,” Ginny said pointing at her picture. “I got knighted that day,” she added. “Harry and Hermione got theirs when he became Duke about a month ago. Anyway, the one to my right is Astoria. She’s the youngest. I’m next youngest. Anyway, sitting at the end is Stacey and standing next to Hermione is Minerva.”

“ You’re his concubine?” Katie asked in shock. “Professor McGonagall is his...?”

“Minnie is actually quite nice,” Ginny said.

“Minnie?”

“Well, it is kind of hard calling her Professor McGonagall after having watched her and Harry doing it and her watching me do it with Harry ... and having girl sex with her.”

“You’ve got to be kidding!”

“I’ll have you know I’ve had sex with everyone in that picture and they’ve all seen me have sex, so no. There are some rules in this house, but not many. The unofficial rule is no fewer than three people can have sex at the same time, although it counts if two of you do it while another waits for their turn.”

“That applies to everyone?”

“Well, since you are bonding with Harry, you will get some exclusive Harry Time tonight.”

“I’m bonding with ... Harry?”

“Of course. Of the girls who came in today, who do you think he’d pick to join the real Harry Potter Fan Club? Now, our ladies in Green are House Black,” Ginny Continued. “Harry is also Lord Black, Head

of that Ancient and Noble House. Luna is his Lady Black and Countess of Darby.”

“Luna?” Katie asked, “as in Luna Lovegood? I can’t believe she and Hermione…”

“ Believe it,” Ginny giggled. “Those two have very active imaginations! So the rest of House Black includes…”

“Mallory,” Katie said.

“The former Healer Mallory Grant,” Ginny said. “Now Healer Mallory Black-Potter.”

“Excuse me?”

“Oh, as a Consort they’re Lady Black and Lady Potter. We are Lady Potter-Black, if we’re House Potter or Lady Black-Potter if we’re House Black.”

“What’s the difference? Is there one?”

“Well, as you see House Potter wears Blue at State Dinners while House Black wears green.”

“I mean any other differences?”

“Aside from that and our last names, no. It doesn’t matter to us or to Harry whether you’re Katie Potter-Black or Katie Black-Potter. None of that matters when we’re naked, which is a fair bit. Now the others are Dora – she was an Auror – and Daphne.”

“She looks familiar,” Katie said.

“You might remember her as Daphne Greengrass. Astoria is her younger sister.”

“So you’re saying Harry tamed the famed Ice Princess of Slytherin?”

“Er, I wouldn’t call her tame. She’s a wild one in the sack. Then again, I think we all are at least to some extent,” Ginny added with a giggle.

“How did you become a ... you’re a Pureblood!” Katie said.

“As are Daphne and Astoria,” Ginny replied. “Okay. Hermione was brought here the day after we left school and jumped Harry here in the Library that afternoon and became his Consort...”

“I never would have seen that coming,” Katie said.

“... he inherited Dora and Mallory from his Godfather the last Lord Black,” Ginny continued, “and Minnie from his Grandfather. He bonded with them on the same part of the same couch where he and Hermione first did it and became bound. The Greengrass sisters’ Dad was given a choice by the Death Eaters to sell them to the next Lord Black or their entire family would be killed. Apparently the stupid Death Eaters thought Malfoy would be Lord Black. So Harry took them to keep them and their family safe and bound to them where he bonded with the others. Luna was brought here after the Death Eaters tried to kill her, Hermione, Neville, Susan and me. It didn’t go well for the Death Eaters, but Luna’s Dad was killed and her mother was already dead so she became Harry’s Black Consort right here as well. A bunch of Pureblood bastards owed the Black Estate a lot of money and couldn’t pay. Stacey was a Concubine for Draco Malfoy’s father, who is now both in prison and broke.”

“Draco?”

“His father, although the Ferret is now one of the poorest who will be attending Hogwarts. Anyway, that’s how we got Stacey and Laura and Rhonda for House Potter and Fiona and Karen for House Black. They’re not in the picture ‘cause they came in after. As for me? My Mum was involved in a plot to kill Harry and I was given to him to avoid a blood feud.”

“You were given to him?” Katie asked in shock.

“It’s not so bad,” Ginny said. “I actually am grateful in a way, ‘cause no other boy will ever touch me again. God! One little kiss and they think they can do what they want to with you! I mean Michael Corner was magical raised so I’m not surprised he thought I should have just spread my legs for him, but I figured Dean being Muggle Raised would be different! Maybe it’s a boy thing.”

“They didn’t do anything...”

“No,” Ginny said. “They knew I could hex them into next week if they tried and my brothers would kill them. But they made sure I knew what they wanted.”

“And Harry?”

“Oh, he’s different,” Ginny said. “First of all, as his Concubine, I couldn’t say ‘no’ if I wanted to and second of all, when it came to that I didn’t want to.”

“Didn’t want to do it?”

“Didn’t want to say ‘no’. It helped that he was a friend and I knew he wouldn’t hurt me – well, anymore than it would have to hurt anyway. Dora thinks it might also be because he’s scary powerful magically and that seems to be a huge turn on for us witches.”

“Will it be that way with me?” Katie asked.

“It can be wonderful,” Ginny sighed. “It can be if you want it to be. I know Harry hopes it will be for you. He does like you. If you are willing to accept this, it is wonderful.”

“And what will I be when it’s done?”

“My flat-mate,” Ginny said.

“I don’t understand.”

“When we’re not in Harry’s very huge bed, we have our own room, but we share a common room with another of Harry’s Girls. You and I will share a common room. You’ll move in tomorrow.”

“Why tomorrow?”

“’ Cause tonight you’ll sleep with Harry.”

“And what if I don’t want to?” Katie asked in protest.

“Well, Harry could order you to, but he’s never done that. Then again, no one has ever not wanted to snuggle with Harry all night long. He really knows how to curl your toes!”

“So they’re fourteen of us?”

“Fifteen,” Ginny said. “Tabatha was bought at the Auction like you were. She joined us a week ago.”

“So, I’m going to be in the family of twenty-four?” Katie said.

“Hermione’s worked out a schedule. You’ll sleep with Harry about once a week and if it’s during a weekday ... well it seems he’s decided that the girls who sleep with him and one of his Consorts on a weekday go on a date with him for dinner. Tonight’s the first one at least for us.”

“I don’t understand.”

“You wouldn’t believe how busy we are here,” Ginny said. “It’s more interesting than school and so far there’s no boring homework, but I think I had more free time in school what with flying lessons...”

“But you’re already a great flyer!”

“Airplanes. Harry’s got a load of them and we’re flying them. It’s actually really cool! Anyway, we have ground school in the mornings

and flying two afternoons a week for now. Once all the girls are here it might be sane again, assuming it ever was. But as busy as we girls are, it's worse for our Harry. So he's got magical help. Something called a Time Turner which lets him spend three days doing what he needs to do for every day of the week."

"Why are you here, Ginny? Why are you telling me this?"

"Harry and Hermione found out this transition is easier if you begin it with your eyes and mind open," Ginny said. "If you talk to those who were Concubines before Harry, they'll tell you that in Britain you show up confused and are taken before you have any idea what is going on. We do it different. That's why you had that long lesson from Minnie and why I'm here. Hopefully, when it begins, you'll be less terrified and more willing to give this life a chance. It may not be what you wanted, but I think we'd all say it's probably more wonderful than we deserve really."

"And when will this happen?"

Ginny looked over her shoulder and saw the other witches entering. "Very soon. Relax, Katie. It will be wonderful!"

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*



1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*P
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P - girl.
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
12. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
15. Katie Anna Bell, age 17 (6/6/79) (Gr-6); CONCUBINE (POTTER) 7/22/96.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
9. Christine Celine Paulson, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
10. Mandy Brocklehurst, age 16 (1/28/80) (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/22/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
8. Hannah Suzanne Abbott, age 16 (5/16/80) (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/22/96.
9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (3/17/82) (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/22/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).

6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
9. Caroline Folsom, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (10/29/80) (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/22/96.

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SD); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
10. Tammy Grey, age 15 (3/6/81) (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/22/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle Hanson, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
2. Amelia Renee Carpenter, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).
2. Sandra Ellen Butler, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
5. Marie White, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE: REMEMBERING

TUESDAY, JULY 23rd, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry woke up at six. He had already worked this bit out. He felt a little guilty about having to get up so early while his newly bound witch slept. He didn't mind leaving notes, but they deserved a better and more intimate first morning, he thought. Now that he was turning time, he could give them that. In this case, Tuesday Version One would slip out of bed and join Luna and, as it turned out Dora for breakfast. Version One Harry would take Hermione and Stacey out to dinner and sleep with them later on. First Tuesday was spent on Duke business.

He met with his construction supervisor in the morning to begin plans for the new town. Mr. Archer arrived with all kinds of plans for houses and other buildings. They were "stock" plans as he called them and buildings like the ones he proposed had been built all over the country in the last few decades. The houses all had four to five bedrooms, depending upon how the family that lived there used them. They were larger, it seemed, than the houses Harry remembered from Britain and each had an attached garage. There were forty different designs, yet all were designed to look "older" such that they would not seem out of place in any of the existing towns. As each design could be reversed, it meant there were eighty different models of houses ready to build.

Mr. Archer recommended that the loop around the lake be changed. Where the road intersected with itself southeast of the lake, that road should then extend east to the main highway giving the town at least two roads into it. That intersection would become the town center and the shops and offices would be clustered in the vicinity. In addition to shops for groceries and other daily items, there would be other stores as well. There would probably be a barber and hair salon, a health clinic staffed out of the nearby hospital, probably a nice restaurant and at least one pub, not to mention space for other businesses as well. He would also include the primary school and a Town Hall.

The Hotel and five Manors would be between the lake and the road around it. On the other side of that looping road would be between

sixty and seventy of these new houses. Another sixty would be on the north-south road that connected the lake to the entry drive for Potter Manor. The remainder of the homes would be built on blocks of streets extending to the east and the main highway. Harry was told if he gave the word now, people could begin moving in as early as late August. Harry did not hesitate to give the work.

Mr. Archer then made a recommendation that Harry had not even considered. In all probability, most of the residents of this new town would work elsewhere, most likely Pottersport or Jamestown. They were a good twenty miles or more from their jobs and Mr. Archer expressed concern about traffic on the country roads. He suggested a commuter rail be built from Jamestown, passing by the new town and connecting with the main rail line near the air base. With that, trains would connect all the major communities in the west of Charenwell (except Potter's Vineyard) and people could take the train to their jobs. It would take three months to build the line, but it would actually enhance the current transportation plan which envisioned a line from Jamestown to Pottersport. Harry approved that as well.

He spent that morning with Fiona and Rhonda acting as assistants, which meant he had some alone time with them. He had lunch with them and Cissy and then spent a couple of hours with Cissy going over the plans for the meeting with the Prime Minister before having time to play with Daphne and Ginny before dinner with Hermione and Stacey.

Tuesday Version Two was spent at the Airfield flying and in Ground School. Harry had Dora and Astoria for a pre-dinner fun time before going out with Luna and Mallory. He ended the day with those two in the Mistress's Bedchamber and having to suffer through Mallory complaining about "morning sickness." Fortunately, she was not feeling too under the weather.

So it was that when he awoke this morning and after an altogether too quick wake up with Luna and Mallory as they were heading off for their morning as well, Harry turned time and was now climbing back into bed with Katie maybe ten minutes after the earlier version of himself had crept out to begin his day. He hoped he had not awakened her when he did, but if he had she would now assume he

had gotten up to use the loo. Time turning could be confusing, he thought as he pulled the still sleeping Katie close, earning a sigh of content from her for his actions.

Harry soon heard his newest partner giggling softly. He looked at her and saw her blue eyes were open and she had a slight smile on her face. "Good Morning, Katie," he said softly before kissing her on the lips earning a soft moan of pleasure from her.

"Good morning, Harry," Katie said.

"Sleep well?"

"Until you got up," she said. "I missed you."

"I wasn't gone that long," Harry replied.

"I still missed you," Katie replied. "Funny."

"What is?"

"I should really be embarrassed or something," Katie said staring into Harry's eyes. "I wake up and find myself naked and in bed with you. I should be mortified. But I'm not."

"You're not?" Harry asked.

"Nope," she giggled. "What I am is randy! Now, are you lust going to sit there or are you going to make love to me hard and fast like a good husband?"

"How can I possibly say no to that?" Harry said as he slid on top of her and entered her earning a long moan of pleasure from her.

Katie had surprised Harry somewhat the night before, or rather three nights before or whenever his First Tuesday night had happened. She had love bonded with him during the sex that followed her initial bonding and asked for permission to have his children. For some

reason, Harry thought she might be a little more reluctant to “go all the way.” But apparently she was not, going so far as to have girl sex with a few of his ladies that evening as well. He was surprised she was ready for more this morning given she had sex with him at least four more times after their initial bonding. It might have been more, but Harry usually stopped counting at some point.

Hermione had apparently cut Harry some slack on his schedule for today. His morning was wide open. So after satisfying Katie’s initial needs, he and she took a long bath together that was far from innocent before sitting down to breakfast in the Second Floor Dining Room. They were joined by Tabatha and Harry and Tabatha introduced Katie, who had yet to say no to anything, to the reasons why the Potter Girls only wore robes and to her first three ways, which she said she really enjoyed. She had seen a couple of them the day before, but had not joined in one before.

With the three of them thoroughly shagged out for now (although Harry was sure he could go a few more laps with these two) they spent the rest of the morning on the Second Floor. Harry admitted he had not been up here in weeks and certainly not after the girls began moving in which was around the time Luna became his Consort.

“Why not?” Katie asked.

Harry shrugged. “I have been busy, but that’s not an excuse. I really don’t know why not. I guess these rooms seem personal for some reason although I can’t really see why. Hermione’s room is my Master Suite where I usually sleep. Luna’s is the Mistress’s Suite and I’ve been there a fair bit as well.”

“Well,” Tabatha said, “you have permission from all of us to look around although most would appreciate it if you stayed out of their dressers and such.”

So Harry began his tour. At the southeast corner were Minerva’s apartments. The corner bedroom was hers. The other bedroom had been turned into an office of sorts. There were pictures in frames in all three of her rooms. Her bedroom contained the more intimate



pictures of her with Harry's Great-Granddad and one of her with his grandparents. There were also some new ones of her with Harry and the others both at Harry's Investiture and at the Queen's State Visit.

The office had pictures of her with every year of students from Gryffindor House. They were dated and Harry could see that she became Head of Gryffindor in 1967. He noted that each picture was of the First Years that year. He paused at the photo from 1971. He could barely recognize some of the students, but eventually he saw his parents, Sirius and Remus. The photo from 1991 showed him and the others in their first year. He was surprised at how young and goofy they all looked.

On the desk was a large book that had more class pictures. These were different as names were written for each person and in some cases dates or other annotations. It did not take Harry long to figure out what she was doing. Again looking at the picture from 1971, he noted that his mother's name noted she was a Consort and a date: 31 Oct 1981. The dates were the day they died. There had been fifteen students who started in Gryffindor that year, eight of whom were witches. Four had annotations that they were probably concubines. Each had left school after Fifth Year, apparently. Aside from those four, Remus and the Death Eater Peter Pettigrew, all the others had dates by their names. Only Sirius had lived passed 1982. The rest of the eight had died before they were twenty-two. It didn't say how they died, but the dates told the story. It was the war.

Every one of Minerva's First Year Lion classes from 1967 to 1980 had at least one student who died in the war. By the looks of things, there were some classes where if there were any survivors at all they were the girls Minerva believed became Concubines. That was no comfort at all.

"Harry?" Katie asked after a time.

Harry sighed. "I just hope and pray there isn't a book like this in our future."

Katie nodded. Both she and Tabatha had figured the book out as well.

Cissy's suite of rooms was on the Southwest corner and Harry decided not to go in. She used it as her office when she wasn't working with Harry. Besides, she was not bound to Harry and Harry felt it would be improper to look in without a specific invitation.

The Suite next to Cissy's belonged to the Greengrass Sisters. They each had their own bedroom and there were pictures everywhere. They had a lot of pictures of them and their family. Harry had not met the three younger sisters, but he could easily see the resemblance. They looked like a happy family. But the girls also had a lot of newer pictures of them with Harry at the various functions to date and several of them with the other girls when they were obviously out in Pottersport for a day of shopping. It struck Harry by their expressions that they seemed just as happy in those new pictures as they were in the old ones.

Across from the "Shopping Twins" now lived Karen and Laura. They too had pictures all over the place. It seems they received scores from their families, including old pictures from when they were younger, before they were stolen away. Each had a picture taken just the other day with Harry and their reunited families. Harry smiled. He told Katie about that day and about how nervous he was to meet the families, not just of his four girls but of all the ones recently returned from Britain. It turned out to be a good day after all.

The suite of rooms next to the Greengrass sisters was that of Fiona and Rhonda and they had similar pictures all over the place. Harry realized that they all were displaying their "family" to whomever entered and he was touched that they all considered this new life worthy of such an honor.

The suites all had a number on the door and the names of the occupants and some other information. If the girls had not finished their schooling, their current year was noted as was their birthdays. Suite 1 had been Minerva's. Suite 2 was Cissy's. Suite 3 was that of Karen and Laura. Suite 4 belonged to Astoria and Daphne. Suite 6 was that of Fiona and Rhonda. The remaining suites south of the Common Room and Dining Room were 5, 7 and 8 and were currently unoccupied. Harry and Katie had taken advantage of Suite 7 the previous night.

On the north side of the floor, Mallory had Suite 16 to herself. She too had pictures. There were several of her and Sirius and one very old picture of her with Sirius, Remus and Harry's Dad. None of the pictures he had seen were too private to display publicly. There were also several newer ones of her, Harry and most all the other girls who now lived here. Harry was at first surprised that there were no early pictures, but then remembered that she had yet to reunite with her family. Maybe one day he could see pictures of little Mallory.

Suite 15 was Dora's. She had several pictures from the last few weeks including (as had Astoria and Daphne) the picture from when she soloed last week. Her older pictures were all of her and her parents from various times in her life going back to when she was a little girl. Damn if she wasn't cute! What surprised Harry a little was the absence of any pictures of her with Sirius or Remus. Maybe there weren't any.

Suite 14 belonged to Tabatha and Stacey. Stacey had several pictures up in her room, all taken since she arrived. There was a large one taken at the Ball of her dancing with Harry. She looked genuinely happy in it. Katie got Harry to blush by suggesting it looked kind of like a wedding photo. Perhaps, Harry thought, in a way it really was.

Tabatha's room had all her stuff from her home. She explained to Katie that they had managed to get all her things and let her parents know she was okay. She got a nice letter from them just yesterday. They didn't know she was a concubine yet and Tabatha was still uncertain how to explain that, but was sure she would be able to.

"After all," she said, "it's not like I'm ashamed of it. I actually think this new life can and will be wonderful!"

She had pictures of her family in her room, but only a couple taken since she arrived here. It was something she said she would work on because if she couldn't wake up with Harry in her bed every morning, then at least she could wake up to his picture, with her of course. She then took off her robe and suggested they give her bed a proper

christening. Harry was not about to say no to her idea. To Harry's surprise, neither it seemed was Katie.

Suite 12 was the one Katie would share with Ginny. Harry saw that Ginny had pictures up. She had a few he had never seen of her with him and another with him, Hermione and Ginny taken at least a year or more ago. She had an old picture of her and Luna taken when they were both probably nine or ten years younger. She had a few recent ones including her with Harry at the ball and group photos of her with House Potter, another like the one Katie saw in the Library (and in each of those girl's rooms) and one of her with Daphne and Astoria. There were also photos of her with her brothers and their families.

"Fred and George are here?" Katie asked.

Harry nodded. "They are. Angelina's George's Consort now and Alicia's Fred's. Oddly with those two ladies one can now tell the two apart."

There was a picture of that year's Quidditch Team, or at least the one that finished the season and won the Cup as Harry, Fred and George had been kicked off the team after the first game. It was one of only two pictures that had Ron in it as he had been Keeper, but Ginny had apparently strategically placed a ribbon over the picture that obscured the former brother and friend. There was only one picture of Ginny's whole family. It was an old one and by the looks of it was taken when Bill finished Hogwarts. Bill was in his school robes and was wearing his Head Boy pin. If Harry had to guess, Bill was then eighteen so this was 1989. Charlie had to be the one Harry didn't recognize. He wore the pin of Quidditch Captain and he would have been sixteen in this picture. Percy was a snotty looking thirteen year old. Fred and George were fighting each other to put rabbit ears behind the pompous git's head. They would have been eleven in this picture and it was their last year before starting Hogwarts. Ron looked angry about something. He would have been nine. Then there was Ginny. She would have been seven in this picture. She looked the happiest of the entire family and was smiling brightly. Arthur and Molly were there as well. Harry guessed this picture was there from a time before Ginny supposed her life and family fell apart.

The last bedroom they visited was to be Katie's. She was surprised at how nice it was, but even more surprised at the boxes in the room.

"What's this?" she asked.

"The Elves," Tabatha said. "They went 'round to my old place as well and brought all my things. Mind you, you'll still get the Greengrass treatment and a whole new wardrobe this weekend. But it's nice to have familiar things. Would you like us to help you unpack?"

"After we break in the bed," Katie said. "Can't let you have all the fun, Tabatha!"

Laura and Karen joined them for lunch in the Second Floor Dining Room. They had a nice, lazy morning sunning themselves in the gardens and were here to join Harry for his afternoon training sessions with the elder Longbottoms and, of course, for their Harry Time. Katie remembered them from the night before and learned that they were both from Charenwell originally and had been illegally sold as Concubines. Harry had acquired them when he confiscated their former owners' estates for failing to pay rent and had brought them home. True, they were still technically concubines, but they had Love Bonded with Harry since returning and Karen already had permissions for a child. Laura would ask, but had decided to wait a few months.

"After all," she said, "with all those who are either pregnant or will be soon, I figured Harry could use a bit of a break."

"How many?" Katie asked.

"Let's see," Harry replied. "Mallory is expecting a boy and Minerva a girl. Hermione and Dora are pregnant, although it's too soon to say with what, aside from the fact that it's mine. Luna, Daphne, Ginny, Stacey, Karen and Rhonda - and you of course - have permission as well. Only Laura, Fiona, Tabatha and Astoria do not have permission. We think Astoria should wait a bit. The others chose to wait a bit."

Katie nodded. "How bad is it?"

"Right now?" Harry replied, "not so bad. Mallory was complaining last night - well my last night. I'm sure the spring is going to be an adventure. But so far not so bad."

"Sorry," Katie said. "That's not what I meant. How many of us are there?"

"You mean all told here in Charenwell or in Britain?"

"Your new family," Katie said, "and the others. I mean I know Fred, George, Angelina and Alicia are here. But are there others? Who else will I know?"

"Neville Longbottom," Harry said. "Susan Bones became his Consort and they came here after the Death Eaters failed to kill them."

"Oh my!"

"He and Susan killed two of the nastiest," Harry said. "He inherited a Concubine and now has a few more. Fred and George bought a store in Diagon Alley..."

"I know," Katie said. "That's where I was when I got called here. It was empty."

"From what they said, Diagon Alley is empty."

Katie nodded. "It's horrible, Harry. It's like the whole world stopped living. Ollivander's is an empty shambles. The stores that cater to students are still open, but many of the others are all shuttered up. It's like a ghost town."

"The bottom line is," Harry said, "there will be a lot of girls here by the end of the summer from Hogwarts. Dumbledore seems to have sold off every eligible Muggle Born he had who was still in school."

Your friend Leanne will be joining Neville's House as will Cho Chang. Three others from your year are here. I suspect the other Muggle Borns are already bound.

"My year is gutted. Only six girls out of eighteen will be returning to Hogwarts. All the others are or soon will be here. Mandy is with Bill Weasley's family now. The rest are either going to be with me or Neville. Basically, fourteen Gryffindors, seventeen Hufflepuffs, fifteen Ravenclaws and five Slytherins are either here or will be."

"Sixty-one?" Katie asked.

Harry nodded. "Most were sold at Auction by our Headmaster. I bought them all, well aside from Susan, Ginny, Luna and Hermione. They are distributed among the other Houses here. I'm to have twenty-four of you ladies. I'd prefer fewer, but I can't just let you suffer like others did and are."

"How ... how much?"

"What?"

"How much did we cost?"

"You're average asking price was about two hundred Galleons."

"Okay, so we're worth more than most dogs. Still. Your Firebolt cost a lot more than that," Katie said with disgust.

Harry nodded. "It's a sick world. I bid two thousand a head for the lot of you. I didn't want anyone to buy you. I got most of you for my opening bid. Some bastard did decide to run it up on a few. Sorry son of a bitch didn't know that two thousand was just an opening bid. I'd have paid a hundred times that for you. You can't put a price on a human life, but the Auction did. I would have paid far more than I did to save you, Katie. Far more to save you and the others as well. Still, I'm not happy that I had to do this."

“We’re glad you did, Harry,” Laura said. “He saved your life, Katie. He saved us all really.”

Katie nodded. It was still a lot to take in. She then remembered what was in her purse. “Harry,” she said, “I found something when I was in Diagon Alley that I think you should see. It’s in my purse.”

Katie got up and left for a few minutes. When she returned, she handed Harry a copy of the Daily Prophet which proclaimed the Ministry had ordered mandatory registration for all Concubines and their owners. Harry took the paper and read it.

“Dobby?” Harry called.

An Elf arrived moments later. “Yes Harry?”

“Could you see to it that copies of this article about concubines are made and distributed to Lord Mayor Lupin, Lord Long Bottom, Frank Longbottom, and the Weasleys and to Cissy, Minerva, Mallory, my Consorts, the Sisters and Dora? If you can get copies to everyone, I’d appreciate it.”

“Right away, Harry Potter, Sir!” the Elf said before taking the paper and disappearing.

“So,” Harry said, “what do you think of that article?” It was after dinner and he had asked for a meeting with those who had been given the article and his entire family of course.

“It really doesn’t say anything, does it?” Hermione replied.

“Just repeats the headline with some minor details about who to contact to register,” Luna added.

“Well, they obviously did this for some reason,” Harry said. “I have a few ideas, but I’d like to hear yours.”

“Taxes,” Remus said. “The girls arguably represent an unreported source of income or its equivalent.”



“Equivalent?” Harry asked.

“The girls perform services that arguably may benefit their Masters in some way. Fred and George’s shop girls were not paid. As their employer was not paying for their services, he arguably increased his profits.”

“He still had to feed them,” Harry said.

“We’re not that expensive, Harry?” Verity said. “We had small rooms above the shop and a few changes of clothes for work. We would probably have cost him more if he paid us competitive wages. That and whatever we were costing him we probably more than made back on our backs.”

“So, they increased the profitability of his business,” Remus said. “Add to it that I doubt any of them reported income from their girls - er - entertainment services. It’s possible the Ministry is going to tax them. After all, who should pay your reparations? The Ministry may feel that the people who buy the girls should be the ones paying the penalty.”

“That’s a possibility,” Harry nodded. “If there is a problem with it, it’s that one assumes the Ministry is acting rationally. That would be a first as far as I know.”

“It could be they’re trying to find the twenty-six others,” Dora said. “Or forty-two others, anyway. They might think they’d be in a better position to worm their way out of the fine if they could turn over the women.”

“That thought had crossed my mind,” Harry admitted. “However, the owners would want to be paid. I doubt they’d turn the girls over in a spirit of generosity and compassion. Somehow, I don’t see the Ministry as being willing to pay one Knut more than they absolutely have to and even then they’re going to try and get out of it.”

“So what do you make of it Harry?”

“Two possibilities. One, the Ministry is dumb enough to think I’ll be a good boy and register as the law requires. It might be a ploy to lure me back to Britain. Then again, they might think I’m still there. The other possibility is the fines. They know I won’t register and will use that as a means to cancel out my demand. They’ll say I owe them four point two million for having unregistered concubines.”

“But you don’t live there anymore!” Hermione said.

“I still have a seat on the Wizengamot,” Harry said. “They could use that as justification. Still, the law that’s quoted in the paper arguably does not apply unless I maintain my concubines in Britain, which I do not.”

“We did come from there,” Katie pointed out.

Harry nodded. “But you were not bound to me there. Only Minerva, Mallory and Dora have even been back since they were bound to me and that was on business. They live here.”

“I was bound to you there,” Ginny said. “That might be what they’re thinking. I mean what happened that day was in the papers and everyone knows you took me...”

“You were bound in Gringotts,” Harry said. “Technically, that’s not Britain.”

“As if the Ministry would see a distinction,” Dora said.

“Hence my thinking,” Harry nodded. “I doubt the Ministry is doing this as a sign of good faith. I mean they want the girls registered with the Animal Control people!”

“What is more interesting is the fact they made this public,” Minerva said. “They have never publically acknowledged there are more than a handful of Concubines in Britain. Ginny is the first publicly acknowledge concubine in years. The vast majority of us are unknown to the public at large or if known, invisible. Whatever their reasons, this is a major departure from custom.”

“And the Ministry is not an organization known for doing anything new, novel or against custom,” Dora added. “They must realize they are totally screwed.”

“Meaning the least annoying possibility is they’re trying to find a way to negotiate,” Harry said. “The problem is I’m not really in the mood. If they come up with the twenty-six who are still missing, I might cut them some slack as to those women, provided they are sold to us and repatriated. But, it’s still a hundred thousand a head for any who they did not return to us.”

“What are your plans?” Remus asked.

“If it’s some kind of plan to get to me, then the smart thing to do is nothing,” Harry said. “If they are acting in what they think is good faith, we’ll know soon enough. Still, regardless of what this means it is an interesting development. How’s the article coming Luna?”

“It should be ready by Monday,” Luna replied.

“Good. The idiots just made that article very relevant.”

“How?”

“They’ve admitted that there are concubines and probably more than they know about. Why else would you ask people to register? If they knew of all concubines, registration would be pretty silly. So now even the Muggle Borns are aware of something amiss...”

“Assuming they’re taking the Daily Prophet,” Hermione said.

“True. But even if they weren’t, this notice can be included in our edition of the Quibbler and they can soon learn that it’s real.”

“And now the story has the added credibility,” Luna said. “It’ll be harder for the Ministry or anyone else to say this is another one of Daddy’s conspiracy theories.”

“My thoughts exactly,” Harry said. “With this registration and your article, it might be a lot easier to convince the Muggle Borns to move here. We might even want to expand our nets, as it were, and make similar offers to the Half Blood families with Muggle or Muggle Born parents.”

“You might very well depopulate the place,” Hermione noted.

“Only if everyone agreed and none are threats,” Harry said. “As bad as things are, I don’t think everyone will agree to the move and I won’t force them to.”

“Jamestown might not be big enough,” Remus said.

Harry shrugged. “Land is not a major factor. We can always build another town if need be. The undeveloped lands we can open would more than double the size of this country in terms of settled lands. Denying the enemy their targets and slave class is more important than any other consideration.”

“That and it would give you a large recruiting base for your military,” Dora said.

“I know,” Harry replied. “And that recruiting base won’t have the same problems that I suspect my people here have. To most, Britain is Outside and of little note or concern. I hope a fair few of our current citizens volunteer, but I can’t count on that and I am reluctant to make service mandatory.”

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Connie Plumber was a sixteen year old, Muggle Born witch who lived with her family in a suburb of London. She was the youngest of four children and the only daughter. Unlike many Muggle Borns, she had known about magic most of her life and certainly as far back as she could remember. Her older brothers were all Muggle Born wizards and the oldest, Peter, had received his letter inviting him to attend St. George’s when Connie was only three. While she did not remember

the day her family learned about magic, she had never not known about it and had known since she was five that she was magical just like her older brothers.

She had also been told from a very early age that magic was a secret and that she could only talk about it or hear of it at home with her immediate family. As a young girl, she had kept the secret because it was important to her parents and they had told her bad things would happen if she told anyone. She never did, at least she never told anyone who was not magical themselves which meant she had kept silent until she too was to head off to St. George's.

Like any young person, when Connie first went off to Primary School, she wanted to make friends. But this big secret was a problem. If she had a friend, she might tell and they wouldn't be her friend anymore. Not that it mattered. She was an outcast anyway. Then again, her brothers had been outcasts as well for the most part. When she finally went to magical school, she was able to meet many Muggle Borns like herself and found that most of them had been misfits and outcasts in their Muggle Schools. She thought about that. Perhaps, she thought, young children could sense magic in another young child. She learned that young magical children were magically "unstable" meaning they could neither control their magic nor would it keep from "leaking." As they got older, the magic stabilized and could be controlled and would not manifest itself as readily which was why, she was told, magical training began at age eleven.

If young Muggle children could sense something from magical children, this might explain why the Muggle Borns were generally outcasts in Muggle school. The other children would sense something was different about them, and children tended to not like "different." Connie had reached this conclusion before she was officially told she was a witch and invited to magical school. Being mostly alone in class and on the playground made her a keen observer of others and she could see how being different led to being separated. If a child was big or small for their age, they were different. If they didn't dress well, they were different. If they had glasses, they could be different (it certainly did not help). If they talked funny, they were different. So, if a non-magical child could sense magic, even if they had no idea

what it was, and connected that sensation with the magical child, that child was different and would find it difficult to have any real friends.

Connie had attended two primary schools by the time she finally joined the magical world. Her first was in Surry and she was “one of those Plumbers.” Her brothers had long been “different” and treated as such by most of their classmates and she was treated as such by default. Although she now thought that had she been the oldest, it might well have been the same for her. At her first school, she did have a friend of sorts. She only saw her friend at school for some reason. He never spoke about his family or home, never invited her over and was never able to accept an invitation. But he sat with her in class, at lunch and on the playground, at least when they were not being tormented by bullies. He was small for his age, wore glasses and bad clothes. He was even the best in their year for a short time. All of these screamed “different,” although part of her thought there might be more. But of course, she couldn’t talk to him about that!

When she was eight, her family moved to a new town and she started a new school. By then, her two older brothers were off at St. George’s. For the first time, she and her brother Edgar were able to make some friends. Whatever had been different about them before was gone and now their only claim to being different was being new. Connie now thought that their magic was more mature by then and could not be “sensed.” Either that, or non-magical children lose their sense for magic as they get older.

Even though he had promised, her old friend never wrote to her. She had forgotten his name in time, although she always remembered him. A part of her hoped her suspicions about him were true and he was magical as well. But he was not part of her class at St. George’s, so she figured maybe it had just been hope.

Magic had made her an outcast in the non-magical world, she now believed. To her dismay, it had made her one in the magical world as well. It was not as bad, as there were a lot of Muggle Borns in her class. But it was clear that Muggle Borns were looked down upon by at least some of the other students, particularly those who came from a long, magical line. There were aspects of both magic and the magical world she really liked and she studied hard to master her gift.

But the longer she was a witch in the magical world, the more she suspected it was not the paradise she had thought it might be when she was younger. She remembered her first trip to Diagon Alley when she was four and to her the world was right out of a fairy tale. Now, at sixteen, she was more cynical. There were nice people in this world, but she felt it was stuck in another time and in that way it could be primitive and even barbaric.

While her increasingly cynical view of the magical world was due in part to her observations, she would admit her History of Magic teacher was another major influence. She was a Muggle Born witch who, after finishing St. George's, had worked on her Muggle education and eventually attended university where she studied Muggle history. It was clear practically from day one First Year what she thought of the approved course and exams in the Magical World.

"You can call it History," Connie remembered Professor Jackson saying, "and you're right to a point. It does contain a list of names and dates and events. But as a study of those events, as an analysis of how what we were, where we've been as a people and society and where we are, it's rubbish. It's not even in chronological order and what is in this book make little sense for none of it's placed in any context even within our own world, much less the world at large."

And Professor Jackson was right. Their text was little more than a list of things someone considered important and it probably was in the order of when someone thought it important enough to put in the book. It was a haphazard list of when spells or potions were invented and by whom juxtaposed among some wars with Goblins and treaties and things that made little sense at all.

Professor Jackson said that all histories must be read critically. At all times, one must consider who the historian is writing about, what they base their writing upon, what point the writer is trying to make and who the work is written for. While the people, events and dates might be the same for two different writers, the context and analysis might lead one to believe the two books are talking about two completely different things. History can be apologetic, rationalizing policies that may not be rational. It can also be used to justify the present. It is inherently biased based upon when it is written even by historians

who come close to being objective. A history of a recent event might be very different than a history of the same event written centuries later.

For example, King Richard III was vilified in commentaries and histories for a few centuries after this death. He was a usurper and a vile, petty, evil, violent man. But those commentaries and histories were written during the time of the Tudors and Stuarts and remained accepted for some time. It was, of course, important for the Tudors to vilify and marginalize Richard, who was in fact the brother of the King before him and next in line for the throne should the King's sons not reach their majority and by custom would serve as King in all but name during the infancy of the heir. It was possible King Richard III saw the boys die, but that was after he had been crowned and his right to rule recognized as valid, not before. One must remember he was deposed in a Civil War, (one which had been raging for decades), as two factions fought for the disputed crown and ultimately lost to a very distant claimant line, the Tudors and Henry VII who were hardly magnanimous in victory. Henry VII was as brutal in ending claims against the throne as Richard was alleged to have been. That was but one example, and there were many of similar ones about. And one had to remember; the Muggles take history as a far more serious pursuit than do the Magicals.

Professor Jackson made it a point to have her students read two of the magical newspapers, as newspapers were considered a source of current thought by later historians. One paper was the Daily Prophet and the other was the Wizinging Chronicle. The former was considered the national paper, but a more apt description would be the paper for Hogwarts and the ancient lines of families (mostly Hogwarts alumni) who controlled their government and by extension their world. The other paper was founded by a St. George's student and staffed by later students and was arguably more about St. George's than anything else. It was clear to Connie that if one took each paper as true, then there were two completely different worlds.

The Daily Prophet was clearly biased towards the Ministry and where it was critical; it usually blamed one part of the Ministry by highlighting the enlightened thought or practices of another. The Chronicle ignored the Ministry for the most part, unless it did something that



affected St. George's and its community. If the actions were deemed by the editors as adverse, it was highly critical. A recent example was the Ministry actions towards education which, oddly, only seemed to affect Hogwarts. The Prophet reported every action and Educational Decree in detail. As none of these decrees affected St. George's, the Chronicle never even mentioned them. There had been an event at Hogwarts called the Tri-Wizard Tournament, which was front page news in the Prophet for almost a year. It was mentioned, briefly, in the Chronicle, but you had to look for it. About the only things the papers agreed on in terms of importance were professional Quidditch and Death Eaters, although once again the coverage had been different. The Prophet reported Death Eaters as a threat led by a mass murderer named Sirius Black. The Chronicle dismissed this Black fellow as a leader and blamed the resurgence on the Ministry and its hands off policy regarding the terrorists. According to the Chronicle, Death Eaters were vile, murdering bastards protected by the Ministry because their relatives controlled the major departments and the Wizengamot going so far as to suggest the Death Eaters were unofficial government shock troops. The truth, Professor Jackson suggested, was probably somewhere in between and in any event not pleasant.

Professor Jackson made it a point to discuss two major areas where she felt "magical history" was little more than "Pureblood Propaganda." The first were the various Goblin Wars. If one believed the "history," the wars were always started by the Goblins and always without provocation. This was not the reality of things. One time? Maybe. But four? Naturally, the wizards always won decisively. But if that was true, how did one explain the last Peace Treaty which gave the Goblin nations an exclusive monopoly in banking and finance? That hardly sounds like a treaty arising from a decisive victory. Indirectly, it gave the Goblins significant control in magical affairs, which was precisely what the wizards had been fighting against!

The other was the Statute of Secrecy. According to the approved history, it was the result of two concerns regarding the Muggle world. The first was the belief that Muggles would "use" magic to solve their problems given a chance and the second was the historic persecution of "magic." Yet the two reasons were contradictions. If the Muggles really wanted to control magic for their benefit why were

there persecutions? And if they really were trying to persecute magicals, why was it that most all of their victims were Muggles? The various “witch hunts” were just that. Even in the worst of times, few if any were burned for being wizards (men were burned for heresy). The truth was many of the witch hunts were power grabs by Muggle rulers, part of a greater war, or simply persecution of women and free thinkers.

The first major pogrom in the last thousand years was against a people called the Cathars in the Twelfth Century. They were deemed heretics primarily and their women witches. It was actually a land grab by the French King, as was the eradication of the Knights Templar in the early Fourteenth Century, although the fact that the Templars were the wealthiest financial institution in Europe at the time and the King who purged them was in debt to them up to his eyeballs probably did not help. Neither of those two pogroms were specifically cited in the magical history as significant (aside from further evidence of animus). The reason was like most of the “Burning Times” culminating in the late Sixteenth Century, few if any magicals were ever caught. Then again, if you burn two thousand women at random, sooner or later you might get lucky and catch a real witch. The last major pogrom was during the Wars of the Reformation which raged across Europe between the Catholic Church and the Protestants where each side accused the other of heresy and killed the other’s supporters with abandon. Magic was a buzz word for heresy, not magic!

A prime example was the book called the *Maleus Maleficarum* (?) or “Witches Hammer.” It was written by two German priests who were members of the Catholic Inquisition and were tasked to provide a handbook for stamping out the Protestant Heresy. They used their commission to write a laughable treatise on witchcraft. Although it was used, the Church which commissioned it banned the book and excommunicated the authors for heresy! And again, if an inquisitor caught a real witch using that book, they were lucky.

These were the justifications for the Statute of Secrecy. And yet that Statute was signed when “witch hunts” were all but a thing of the past. The “Burning Times” ended a few generations earlier! If the Muggles

were no longer all that interested in burning witches, why did the magicals then deem it necessary to hide their world? What was even more perplexing was that according to the official history, Muggles were weaker than magicals to begin with. If you are stronger than another, why hide? The truth was that while there may have been a time when wizards were “stronger” than Muggles, by the late Seventeenth Century that time was long past. The Muggles were both far too numerous and growing more so every generation and their technology was becoming a problem that could not be countered easily. Basically, the Statute came in at a time when the magical world realized that should the Muggles ever make a serious effort to persecute magic, they were now more than capable of being successful! The strong adapt when faced with adversity; the weak hide! Why else would there be a societal aversion to technology in the magical world? Why also was there such a thing as wizarding wireless? Why was the magical world an artistic wasteland without notable artists, musicians or writers? Why in many ways was the magical world a pale imitation of the non-magical? Why were there no great universities in the magical world? Innovation in all things drove the modern Muggle world. In the magical world, one need not be able to define the word innovation for the concept was foreign!

This discussion led to another of Professor Jackson’s criticisms: the societal disparities in Magical Britain. She stated that many magicals, and particularly those in positions of power in their world, came from old families who had been a part of this world for generations and in some case for well over a thousand years. They had, through much of that time even before the Statute of Secrecy lived apart from the non-magical world and looked upon it with at best suspicion. She would argue that the Statute served another purpose which was to control the new lines of magic. Discourse between magic and non-magic had occurred in the past and almost always it was driven by magicals with recent familial ties to the non-magical world. Then again those magical, be they Muggle Borns or Half-bloods, understood their non-magical kin or at least made an effort to do so. The old society, steeped in tradition, did not. Some of those in power saw the new blood as threats to their order and arguably their control. The new blood brought with it new and what the old blood considered potentially subversive ideas that threatened the established order. In the Muggle world, these people were called at various times

revolutionaries and heretics. In the magical world they had no such name, but were viewed with similar suspicion.

The last magical War was more of a counter-revolutionary pogrom against perceived heresy than a true war. The aim was to control and subjugate all with non-magical roots or sympathies. While that war had ended abruptly, the attitudes that gave rise to it remained. What was truly unfortunate is that the would be suppressors would condemn the magical world to suicide. Magic is strengthened by new blood, not as the powers that be believed weakened. Healers knew that Muggle Borns were on average more magically talented than Purebloods and Squibs were a phenomenon peculiar to Pureblood families. And yet the Muggle Borns were still perceived as second class at least within the oligarchy of old families that held all the seats in the Wizengamot and all significant posts within the Ministry itself. Until that changed, the magical world was in danger from within. But this was not what one would be led to believe reading the approved history which trumpeted the glories of tradition and the old families.

It was no wonder Connie had become cynical. The truth was that inequities in her new world disappointed her but no longer surprised her at all. Maybe one day momentum would drive a change for the better for all magical kind, but she was yet to be living in those times. A part of her hoped for those times and longed to be a part of them, but she knew she alone could not bring that about. While there had been new laws supposedly increasing Muggle Born rights, she knew they were not worth the parchment unless those laws were enforced and from what she had seen, they received lip service at best.

She was reading a book on the Middle Ages her professor had recommended for the summer when it happened. Suddenly, she found herself in another place, obviously by some kind of magic. She was not alone. Five other young women were there as well, all of whom were confused at what had just happened. All of them, it turned out were Muggle Born witches and aside from her all had been attending Hogwarts, which Professor Jackson ridiculed as the intellectual center of the old family philosophy. Megan Jones introduced herself first. She said she was sixteen and had finished her Fifth Year in something called Hufflepuff House. Connie knew the name was for one of the Founders of Hogwarts, as that was part of

the official history (which conveniently ignored the existence of St. George's.) Wendy Hendricks, Simone Fanning and Pamela Adams were all a year behind her and had been in Gryffindor, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw respectively. Selene Adams was Pamela's younger sister and a Ravenclaw as well who had just finished her second year.

They were met by an older witch whom the other witches knew. The older woman was a respected teacher from Hogwarts which caused her students to relax somewhat. Then the witch began telling them why they were here. For Connie, it was further proof that Professor Jackson was onto something although she wished her Professor had said something about this. Then again, perhaps her professor had not known. That the magicals still had a form of involuntary servitude, while a shock to the others, was consistent with what Connie had learned even if it had not been covered. That the burden fell exclusively on the witches was also not as much of a surprise. What she had read and witnessed suggested that the magical world was not egalitarian and the women who rose to prominence outside of education, Healing and other roles not associated with the power base were the exception and not the rule. That the burden fell most heavily on Muggle Borns was also not a surprise. Why, however was. Her Professor had not talked about Magical Guardians and the near absolute power they held over their wards, and in particular their female wards. Then again, as a Muggle Born who somehow avoided the slaver's net, perhaps she didn't know.

Connie soon found herself in an immense library awaiting her fate. Despite assurances that their condition would not be like what they most likely could have expected in Britain, she was still to be bound against her will. Typical, she thought. A gilded cage, however luxurious, was still a cage. If there was one advantage to being cynical, it was that bad things were if not expected and least not a surprise. It was the good things that surprised her. A witch named Tabatha was with her at first trying to cheer her up for lack of a better word. Connie ignored the girl as best she could. There apparently was nothing that could be done to avoid this fate and she wondered why anyone would try to make it sound better than it was.

Soon, there were a lot of other witches in the library; all dressed as the one named Tabatha was in short, silky robes. Connie knew it

would soon happen. The wizard would arrive to deprive her of her freedom. The wizard would arrive to take her virtue and bind her to him. The wizard would arrive to rape her, for that's what it was despite everything McGonagall and Tabatha said. Connie found it hard to believe it could be enjoyable. Even if it was, however, it was still rape because it was not her choice. However wonderful this wizard was – and according to this Tabatha girl he was wonderful on so many levels – before her sat the proof of the hypocrisy: while two of these women might have chosen their fate as Consorts, it was arguably to avoid the fate that awaited her as a Concubine. And the number of women proved this wizard was nothing more than a serial rapist, all other arguments to the contrary!

He arrived and she looked up and met his eyes. It was if a block was lifted and memories barely perceived for years returned at once. It was him! It was her first friend! She now remembered everything! His name, their friendship and how an evil wizard took it all away the summer when she was eight! He had been on the run from them for days. Just before the end of school, the local bullies had been chasing him. Connie had known for months her best friend was a wizard, and probably a powerful one. Moreover, her Harry knew it too. He didn't need to be told, he had figured it out on his own and when he told her, she told him she was magical too! But the bullies still chased him and he apparated up to the top of the school. The "bad men" came looking for him, but he just apparated away. He showed up at her house – how he found out where she lived she never knew – a few days later dirty and hungry. He's been apparating all around the country trying to get away from the "bad men" and came to her figuring they'd never suspect she was a witch and seemed quite unwilling to risk being amongst the non-magical folk. Her parents were Muggles, but agreed to hide him. He was with them for a week when the "bad men" showed up. She remembered their leader who was named after a bug. She remembered him casting spells on her and her family and her friend and forgetting almost all about Harry. Her parents moved to another town within the week as if it had been planned all along, but Connie knew now it had not been. It had been the magic. The old bastard took her best friend away!

"Harry?" she asked.

Harry nodded.

“You remember?”

“I do now,” Harry said.

“Memory charm?”

“Obviously,” he frowned. “And it seems it was neither the first nor the last the old bastard used on me over the years.”

“Did you know?” Connie asked. “Did you know when you bought me?”

Harry shook his head. “I had no memory of you, my first best friend, until just now. Apparently seeing you lifted the block.”

“I didn’t remember you either,” Connie said, “although I remembered of you kind of. I remember a boy whose face I could not see and name seemed unimportant; a friend who was my first friend back in Primary School. I remember believing he was magical like me and my brothers. I remember he was always there for me and that we moved away and I never heard from him again nor knew how to find him.”

“It was 1988,” Harry nodded.

“What happened?” Hermione asked. “You two knew each other?”

“Connie was my only friend anywhere back then,” Harry said nodding. “Fall term I figured out that I could do real magic. It was the only explanation. It also explained why my relatives hated me and why they thought I was a ‘freak’ and kept me locked in a cupboard much of the time. I told Connie one day and she told me about magic. It was real! Her brothers were wizards and the older ones were in a school for witches and wizards and she was a witch too.

“When I told her, I remembered the bad men, as we called them. I had discovered magic before and the bad men came and made me

forget. I didn't want to forget and figured they came 'cause my relatives called them, so I practiced my magic far away from them in a wood in a park. I was getting pretty good at it and the bad men had not come. The only problem was Connie couldn't practice with me 'cause it was ..."

"My parents didn't want me wandering about," Connie said.

"As long as I did my chores, my relatives didn't care," Harry continued. "Anyway, it was right at the end of the school year and I got a better mark than my cousin and his friends and they decided to beat me up. They chased me 'round the school and cornered me by some dustbins. I apparated to the roof. I do remember that bit, but not what happened after.

"The bad men came while I was up there. I knew they would make me forget and was afraid they might hurt my friend for telling me the big secret about magic being real. I ran for it. Well, I apparated for it. I have no idea where I went; just that it was somewhere else. The bad men didn't follow so I thought I was safe.

"Well, I was also seven. I was not going to go back to my relatives. Now that I could do that, why did I need to? But I had no money or house or anything (or so I thought) and I still had to eat. With magic I was able to find food."

"You can't conjure food," Hermione began.

"No," Harry agreed, "but you can summon it. I'd walk by an open window or the open door of a market and summon a pie or bag of cookies or candy bars..."

"Harry!" Hermione scolded.

Harry shrugged. "I was seven," he said. "Food was food and sweet food was better and I never had money and didn't know you really needed it. The problem was, within minutes I heard the pops telling me the bad men had come, so off I went again. I did that for I don't know how many days. I'd arrive somewhere new and they wouldn't



follow, but eventually I needed to use magic either to eat, or keep warm or keep dry and they'd be there in minutes and off I'd go again. I couldn't even tell you where, just not where I was or where I had been before. Sometimes I'd be near a town or in a city and others I'd be out in the country and have to walk for miles to find a town. I was tired and getting sick and knew I couldn't keep this up. I needed some place where I could be safe from the bad men and not have to use magic to survive. I thought of Connie. I did magic to bring the bad men, popped off to a place far away, did magic again to draw them as far away from Connie and popped to her front door."

"But you didn't know where I lived," Connie said.

"Apparently, I didn't have to," Harry replied. "I rang the bell and Connie answered and I guess I passed out."

"He was filthy and burning up," Connie said. "My parents took care of him and he told them about his life at his relatives and my parents swore he would never go back again. But about a week or so after Harry showed up, the bad men came calling."

"It was Dumbledore and a couple of Aurors," Harry said. "How they found me, I have no idea, but they did. Dumbledore tried to reason with Connie's parents, but they were not going to listen. They threatened to call the police. That's when the wands came out and that's the last I remember about that or Connie until just now."

"They obliviated all of us," Connie said. "Oh, we still remembered magic as I did have two brothers in magical school. But we all forgot about Harry mostly. All I remembered was a special friend, whom my parents were soon convinced was imaginary. Imaginary or not, that memory always made me feel better. A week later, my family moved to a new town on the other side of London and I started a new school."

"One day, that bastard will pay for what he did to us," Harry said to Connie. "His sick society will pay!"

There was a long pause before Connie spoke again, remembering why she was here. "You still have to bind me to you," she noted.

Harry nodded sadly. "If there was any other way ... I'm sorry."

"It's okay," Connie said. "I'll live. Besides, at least I'm with my imaginary friend again. And who knows? I might even give that next bond thing a go as well. We were friends..."

"As far as I'm concerned, we still are," Harry said with a smile.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin. SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*P

2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*

3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P

4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P - girl.

5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.

6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*

7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
12. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
15. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
16. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (1/19/80) (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK) 7/24/96.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (11/20/80) (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/24/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P - boy, girl (twins).

3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (6/5/80) (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/24/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P

4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).

5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).

6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).

7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).

8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).

9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).

10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).

11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (5/25/81) (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/24/96.

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (9/21/80) (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/24/96.
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (1/29/83) (Ra-2); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/24/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-SIX: SO MUCH FOR 'HOGWARTS: A HISTORY'

THURSDAY, JULY 25th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry was up early his first time through Thursday. This time through would be different than recently. First of all, he was not doing his Duke Day first, although Hermione & Friend Night (this night with Ginny) would go as scheduled as would Luna & Friend Night (with Tabatha) on Thursday Version Two. Version Two Thursday would be Ground School and Flight Training. His Duke Day would be his third time through this day.

More importantly, however, a conversation he had with his ladies last light in between being intimate with some of them and Connie changed how he'd approach this day. Today (his third time through, of course) he was to meet with the Prime Minister and several others. For that meeting, he wanted his ladies to be available, at least for the luncheon, but he also wanted them to be flying as well when the Prime Minister and his people visited the Air Base. He reasoned that he needed to show those people he was serious about what he had set out to do and this was not some summer holiday idea. Seeing the beginnings of their Air Force hard at training should help.

Finally, he wanted to make sure he was ready for the meeting and knew he needed their help. The Harry Potter who woke up that morning with his first Best Friend now both Love Bonded to him and sleeping lightly in his arms was not the same Harry Potter who had spent that wonderful Sunday with his One True Love a month and two days ago. That Harry, the one that had left Hogwarts, was determined to do everything himself and had to be convinced to let others help. This new Harry knew he could not possibly do everything he wanted to himself and welcomed the help of his ladies and others. Many of the ideas that were well underway in his fledgling war effort were at the very least inspired by one or more of his ladies if he did not adopt them outright as a plan. He knew he had accomplished a lot in the past month, but also knew that much of the credit belonged to his growing family. That was why he wanted them with him every step of the way, for his meeting with the Prime Minister might well be the most important thing thus far.

That, of course, presented a problem. Thus far, since he began using the Time Turner it was only he who was reliving the days. To have his ladies with him where he both wanted and needed them, they would have to join him as he turned time. Naturally, Hermione was read up on the specifics of this magic and more importantly the specifics of this Time Turner. For them to join him, they simply needed to be in the same room when he activated the device. As Connie snuggled against him just before he and she had to get up (assuming she wanted a little Harry Time before breakfast – which she would) he recalled the conversation from the night before.

“I see no problem with that idea provided you don’t ask us to join you back through time too often,” Mallory said.

“Er ... why not?” Harry asked. “Surely it would help you all as much as it helps me with our time and schedules. I mean we all have or will have a lot going on real soon.”

“It would help,” Mallory said, “but have you given any thought to just what you’re doing?”

“If you’re suggesting he’s six days older than we are,” Hermione said, “he’s not. This device does not cause you to age at any rate faster than the time that really has progressed if you don’t abuse it.”

“And living seventeen days for ever seven real days is not abusing it?” Harry asked.

“No,” Hermione smiled, “it’s not. I would never have recommended it’s use if it meant we’d lose so much of one day of our lives with you, Harry. A three to one ratio is safe. If under ordinary circumstances you are – er – supposed to die in 2120 after a long life, this won’t change it.”

“2120?”

“As an example.”

“Oh,” Harry said. “Good then.”



“And it won’t take so much as a second off of our lives either,” Hermione added. “With that device our aging is tied to the natural forces and not the time we actually experience.”

“That’s only true while we are magically stable,” Mallory said.

“Oh?” Hermione and Harry asked.

“At the beginning and the very end of a witch or wizard’s natural life span, they are magically unstable. Just how long this period is and when it will return again varies from person to person. In the elderly, it’s usually brief. But for children it can last for up to nine years. While you’re unstable, time alterations are also unstable. What that means is that when you’re magically stable – as we all are – using the device allows us to gain time without aging at an accelerated rate. But when a person is magically unstable, they do gain age as well as time.”

“Okay, so why is it a problem if we are stable?” Harry asked.

“We are stable. The unborn children we carry are not, Harry,” Mallory said. “They will grow and develop based upon their internal clocks and not the external one of the universe. Thus, while we will gain three days and only age one, they will age three days and be that much closer to being born. A few days here and there might not be a big deal, but if we joined you all the time? By this time next year our kids would be toddlers. We could even have had a second child by then. Normally, two pregnancies over about a three year period is not a problem for most women, but I have no idea what even a single accelerated pregnancy might do. As we are not aging along with the unborn child, I’m not even sure our bodies would adapt at the rate needed. As I said, a day here or there is not a problem. I can’t say the same thing about placing us on Harry’s schedule and as a Healer I will not recommend it.”

“I’m sorry,” Harry said, “I hadn’t thought about that.”

“Neither had I,” Hermione added somewhat surprised at herself.

“Many people might not have,” Mallory said. “You’d be surprised how many women don’t think about things before they see their Healer about their first pregnancy. Given your ages and everything else, I would have been surprised if you had.”

Harry saw Hermione looking very disappointed. “She has a point,” he said softly. “Before this summer did either of us think we’d soon – very soon – be parents?”

Hermione shook her head. “I guess it’s a good thing we have a Healer in the family.”

“It is.”

So it was that for at least this day, his ladies would join him when he turned time. He and Connie woke up early and after a nice, private period of “getting ready for the day” joined the rest of Harry’s House for breakfast. After breakfast, the entire household (including Cissy) assembled in the Library to prepare. Each of his ladies might well have something to contribute in the preparations for the Prime Minister. As far as Harry was concerned, there were two major topics: the building of his armed forces for use in the coming war and the Muggle Born evacuation, both of which were either beyond his ability to do without help from Britain or would be extremely difficult to pull off. However, if his talk with the Queen was any indication, he would first have to get past the inevitable issue of his “unique” family situation, whatever lies the Ministry of Magic had been leaking to the Muggle government and concerns about manpower and cost.

The night before he had asked for a “current” status from the other families. In addition to assuring the Prime Minister as he had the Queen that this situation is neither bordello, a slave culture nor a teen aged boy’s dream come true, he was hoping to be able to show that he and the others were well on their way to fulfilling their promises to their ladies. His own families could be deemed a success, depending upon one’s point of view. As of last night, he was bonded to sixteen witches, fourteen of whom had taken the Love Bond making their bond all but permanent and eliminating the possibility of abuse. The other two were his Consorts for which abuse was not a concern given

the nature of that bond at its inception. Four of his witches were pregnant. Six of his other Concubines had permission, which meant they would be pregnant soon if they were not already (and Luna was trying as well.) Of the five who did not have permission, all had said they would ask in time (which Harry took as not later than May). True, there was no telling how the remaining eight witches would react as they arrived over the next two weeks, but so far his Houses could be deemed a success.

Neville now had nine concubines. Susan and Amber were expecting, but so far Amber was the only concubine. However, six of his other concubines were Love Bonded to him already and three of those had permission. Of the two witches who had not taken either step, Pattie said she would when she turned sixteen and Megan had not even been there a day. (Amanda Kennedy was love bonded but was waiting on the children issue.) Arguably, Neville's family counted as a success.

Aside from his Consort Fleur, Bill now had ten concubines. One was pregnant, four had permission and a total of seven had taken the Love Bond. Two of the three who had not taken either step were younger than Harry. The third, Peggy Nolan, was seventeen and was supposedly considering both steps.

Aside from Fred's Consort Alicia who was hoping she'd test positive on Monday, Fred had ten concubines to date. Six were Love Bonded and all were either pregnant or had permission. Of the four who were not, only Vicki Peters was older than Harry and all four were saying they would when they were ready to "go all the way" as Fred had put it. Aside from the fact that George's Consort was the first of his ladies to become pregnant, all of his statistics were identical to that of his twin brother including the reasons given by the four young ladies who had not taken either step.

Of the ten concubines split between Neville's father Frank and Remus, seven were already Love Bound and had permission. Over all, to date four of seven consorts were pregnant. Of the sixty-three concubines, forty seven were already Love Bonded, eight were already pregnant and thirty-three already had permission. Arguably, this system was working for now, although the thought that forty-five

of the seventy women to date would be having children in the spring for certain was a bit of a shock.

If need be, Harry planned to have most of his younger Concubines discuss their lives as such. In particular, he wanted Stacey to be ready as she was the only British Born witch with recent experience as a Pureblood's sex slave. His for Charenwell girls could also tell of their lives and, of course, their return and what had been a very happy reunion with their families. Astoria and Daphne could tell of the coercion that was a significant part of that culture. The others would be useful with different topics.

Connie and Minerva could both tell at least a side of the real Albus Dumbledore who for all practical purposes ran the government. Ginny might as well and as to how he ruined her family, although Harry hoped the specifics of how she became bound to him might be avoided. Hermione would be the one to discuss the bonds in detail and she and the Greengrass sisters could discuss any historical issues, with Minerva of course. Luna would speak as to the articles that would soon appear in both the Charenwell Press and the Quibbler and was now working feverishly with Katie and Tabatha to try and complete the draft before the meeting. Dora would be able to discuss the Ministry from an insider's perspective and Cissy would be useful for that as well as she was all too familiar with the base corruption that drove it. She and others would also be able to discuss the prejudices that paralyzed that society.

Mallory, Minerva and Dora would also be able to discuss aspects of the proposed evacuation. Dora was already planning the logistics of communicating with and moving tens of thousands. They still did not have an accurate figure which was something Kingsley was trying to steal from Ministry records. True, they had lists of all the Muggle Borns under age nineteen, although that probably did not include those girls who became concubines before this summer. They were not sure if the records reflected those numbers or not. What they did not yet have a handle on were the total number of Muggles who would be affected and they were only now going through the records regarding older Muggle Borns. None of this included others who might be inclined to relocate. It was quite possible Harry's initial planning figures for about twenty thousand or so might be on the low

end. All of these people needed proper housing, jobs, schools for their children, health care and so on. While the Jamestown project was well underway, Harry knew it might not be enough alone. What he desperately wanted to avoid were refugee camps.

The recent actions he had taken were but a first step and he knew it. The evacuation was, if anything, even more important than his longer range plans. The war would begin when it did. He wanted to be ready for that, but so far as Charenwell was really concerned, they were in no immediate hurry. Far more critical to him were the people who'd be the victims of that war and the possible effects on the Muggles who remained ignorant of his world. For now, getting the Muggle Borns out (and maybe a fair few others) and protecting Muggle Britain from the worst of what was coming was foremost in Harry's mind.

But he was certain that the British Magicals could not solve this crisis on their own, at least in a way that the Prime Minister and his people would like. He was also certain Her Majesty's Government would not sit by this time when the war expanded into their world and affected their people. Still, he remained convinced a "magical" intervention was far more appropriate. He wanted the Prime Minister to be assured that Charenwell was a magical ally and would be prepared to help in time.

Their Air Force was already in the process of building up. As of yesterday, his training section had doubled from a month ago. The elves and magicals in the underground shops hoped to have at least six more in service by Monday. There were now nineteen pilots in training. On Monday, the next class of twenty-one would start. The base could handle ground school for forty at a time and hopefully within two or three weeks it would have its full complement of forty-eight Tiger Moths for basic flight training. They had worked out a four week course for basic flight training and an eight week course for advanced that would qualify a pilot in one of the five primary combat aircraft. Basically, so long as there were "recruits" there would be a new class every two weeks.

Harry used Astoria as his idea for their initial qualifications. Most, if not all combat pilots would be young women and any young woman over age seventeen could join. However, for now, younger women

could also join provided they were born before 1982 with their parents or guardians permission. Astoria might well be just about seventeen when the war actually started. Of the seventy witches in the seven houses right now, sixty-two fit the criteria and according to all their Heads had volunteered. Of the slightly more than one hundred who would be here in the next three weeks, an additional fourteen were eligible. Assuming they all volunteered, seventy-eight would be fully qualified to fly their combat plane by December. But Harry knew this was just the beginning. To fully man his Air Force he needed almost two hundred pilots and another one hundred air crew. Even then, without a ground support staff, they might as well do nothing for without mechanics, supply types and the like planes can't fly. Al told, Mr. Jennings recommended a force of at least seven hundred men and women, and that assumed significant elf support on the ground.

But even if they knew how to fly and could keep their planes flying, Harry knew they were a long way from being an Air Force. Flying a plane is not the same thing as fighting one. There were not nearly enough Charenwellians with any air combat experience to teach the new generation combat tactics and such. The handful who had prior RAF experience were all ground support personnel. Even if they learned that – something he hoped the Muggles would help with – an unarmed plane was of little use. They needed weapons! And even then, they were not out of the woods.

While the Lancasters and Dakotas could range over most all of the British Isles from Charenwell, the other planes could not. Unless the Muggles could come up with a way to significantly increase the range, his light bombers, fighters and ground attack aircraft were of very little use. The other option would be to fly out of bases in England itself, which necessitated Muggle cooperation. And even then, Harry could read a map. Most of Ireland was independent from Britain and did not get on with Britain at all. As he saw it, unless his government reached similar yet separate accords with the Republic of Ireland, he could not touch them and it might serve as a fall back point for his enemies.

Assuming the Muggles helped, his Air Force could be more than up for the task. The Pureblood bastards however they were organized had no planes and no defenses against them. Only Muggle resistance could counter this air attack. He knew enough to realize

his planes were horribly antiquated and would not stand a chance against what the Muggles had. But he was not fighting Muggles, was he?

As little as he admittedly knew about air warfare, he knew even less about armies. He was not fool enough to think a war against the magicals could be one entirely from the air. He needed a ground force to hunt them down on the ground, cut them off and kill them. This was the area he had not even begun to deal with yet and of all the requests he hoped to put to the Prime Minister, this was the one that was the most important. He needed an Army of magical troops who could fight in the Muggle style. It took years to train magical troops and even then many possible recruits were not talented enough. A magically capable Mugglized force could be raised quickly, provided they could be armed and trained by people who knew what they were doing. This is what he needed most: people who could teach his people how to fight.

THURSDAY, JULY 25th, 1996 – South Coast Road, Charenwell.

Five dark colored and very large cars left South Farm heading west on the coast road. It was the second group of vehicles to leave that morning. Another group of six had left a few hours before heading to someplace called “RAF Pottersport.” This convoy contained none other than John Major, Prime Minister for Great Britain and a host of others. Each car had a driver from the Royal Household from the Royal Estate where they had spent the night before after flying in to a private air field the previous evening. The Prime Minister was not alone. With him in the spacious passenger compartment were Sir Stephen Blair, the British Ambassador to this country Mr. Major had never heard of before last week and the Prince of Wales. The other cars held other senior officials who were on their way to a meeting the Prime Minister knew far too little about for his liking.

The Prime Minister looked at the gentleman seated across from him, a man he had only met that morning. He had been introduced as Sir. Stephen Blair, Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Charenwell, a country the Prime Minister had not even known about until a few days ago.

“Sir Stephen,” he said, “I must confess this business is bothersome. What is Her Majesty’s interest in this unheard of country and why is it of any concern to my government? For that matter, why is it my Foreign Ministry knows nothing about you? You are a part of the diplomatic service, are you not?”

“In a manner of speaking, Prime Minister,” Sir Stephen replied. “Might I ask if your staff prepared any briefing materials? I would rather not go over well covered ground if it can be avoided.”

“The matter is so hush-hush that there was little,” the Prime Minister confessed. “It’s all Merlin Club stuff which places severe restrictions not just upon who has access to the information, but even those who might assist in its preparation and presentation. The bloody State Secrets Act is less restrictive in ways. Look, all I know is this has something to do with that magic nonsense and some country called Charenwell.”

“Might I ask, Prime Minister, what you know about this magic nonsense?”

“Not much. I didn’t know anything at all until Dame Margaret resigned and I was tapped for this job. She was kind enough to mention it and said she had a fairly good relationship with one Millicent Bagnold through much of her tenure as P.M. I take it the lady was their Minister for Magic?”

Sir Stephen nodded.

“Never met her myself. The only one of those I’ve dealt with at all is that damnable Fudge fellow. He is without a doubt the most arrogant and patronizing bastard I’ve ever met. He seems to think I have nothing better to do than await his august presence. The bastard was right put out when I took office and could not make time to see him immediately upon my arrival at Number 10. There was a war on, you know. We had troops in the field and were getting ready to liberate Kuwait and I was a bit busy getting up to speed and trying to build a working relationship with our Allies. Even when I finally had the time, the pompous bastard treated me like a child. Magic’s real, he says,



and oh by the way it's none of my concern. Then he comes practically unannounced in the summer of '93 begging for ... no, demanding more like ... our assistance in the apprehension of some criminal or some such. I am of the impression he and his government are of questionable competence to manage even the simplest of State affairs. You must understand, Sir Stephen, despite Her Majesty's request, I am not predisposed to help any of that lot."

"Her Majesty is not asking you to, Prime Minister. She probably has less faith in her magical government than you do."

"But this Charenwell is magical and British, is it not?"

"I am Her Majesty's Ambassador, Sir. Surely there would be no need for diplomatic relations if this was truly Britain."

"Explain."

"This is Merlin Club business for a reason, Sir. Charenwell is a magical country and has been for over a thousand years. While it is closely connected to Britain and the Crown, it is also separate and apart from both and has been for centuries. To answer one of your earlier questions, I am Ambassador because I am Merlin Club. You can't be otherwise."

"Family has wizards in it?" the Prime Minister asked.

"That is the case for most Merlin Club in government," Sir Stephen replied, "but some of us are wizards ourselves."

"You're a ...."

Sir Stephen nodded. "This position has always been held by a witch or wizard appointed by the Crown. I've held this position since my father retired in 1971."

"It's hereditary?"

“Given the numbers of magicals both within your government and affiliated with the Crown and that we are or could be considered traitors for our service to you, it tends to run in families. I am the fourth generation to serve in this capacity. But no, I did not inherit this post. I was available for it.”

“And you can tell me why I’m here?”

“Her Majesty’s asked that I leave that to the Duke, Sir. To be honest, while I have spoken with him and have a very good working relationship with the Lord Mayor – he’s your counterpart here – I am not privy to everything that is going on.”

“I see. And why is this Duke important? What authority does he have?”

“In many ways no more than the Queen. But, unlike the Queen, as the only landowner here, that gives him significant influence. The people here are also all distant relations for the most part. As titular head of their families, that also gives him far more influence. Add to it a substantial personal wealth and should he decide to do something, it can happen without much government support. But, before you ask, he is still subject to the laws of this land as are all who live here. He has done much in his private capacity, all of which is quite legal, but we are here because this is now moving into a more public arena.”

“This Duke is also known as Harry Potter?”

Sir Stephen nodded.

“Fudge says he’s no more than a boy and a delusional one at that.”

“As you intimated, Fudge is an idiot. He’s also a bigot and a coward and those are his better qualities,” Sir Stephen said. “He is the definition of a corrupt politician and his practices would make our worst political scandals appear tame. Should Duke Harry desire, he has the money to buy the man off and have their Ministry erect temples in his name, not that the lad would ever do that. I’m not sure if Fudge is capable of original thought or decision. What he is capable

of is taking bribes and staying bought until someone with a larger purse comes along.”

“So what I’ve been told…”

“Is someone else’s agenda and not an accurate description of the Duke, as her Majesty found out a couple weeks ago. Had Her Majesty believed what she had been told by our magical countrymen in regards to the Duke, we would not be here now.”

“So what can you tell me,” the Prime Minister asked.

“I’ve been asked to give you an overview of this country, the Ducal House and its relationship to the Crown.”

“Very well.”

“The Duke is the Heir of House Potter, which is one of the oldest unbroken lines in Europe, if not the world. And, as far back as recorded, House Potter has been magical. We do not know how old it is. The first record of it is from the First Century. House Potter was Briton, but allied itself very early on with the Romans. For its allegiance, it was allowed to retain its ‘ancestral’ lands which are in the Midlands.”

“Are?”

“House Potter has never sold land nor has it ever been dispossessed. Skipping forward several centuries, when the Domesday Book was compiled, House Potter was the third largest estate in England with only the King and Church holding more lands. Anyway, during the Roman Empire, House Potter served as soldiers and administrators, gaining more lands over time. In particular, it gained significant holdings in and around Londinium and along Hadrian’s Wall in the north and in particular at Carlyle and Newcastle. It still retains title to those lands.”

“Bloody hell.”

“When the Roman Empire lost its grip in England, House Potter was one of the largest landowners around. When Arthur, son of Uther Pendragon began to consolidate power in the Fifth Century, House Potter ‘delivered’ much of what would become Mercia to the rising King.”

“Arthur was real?”

“The story you know is an overly romanticized myth. But just as Troy was real, so was Camelot. For his loyalty and courage, Sir Galahad Potter, Earl of Mercia was...”

“Sir Galahad? Sir Galahad the Chaste?”

“He was indeed called that, but not for the reasons in legend. He refrained from relations with women outside of marriage which was deemed odd at the time. But we do know he had six wives...”

“Women tended to die...”

“At the same time,” Sir Stephen continued. “So yes, one of the Duke’s ancestors is Sir Galahad. Now, in one respect the Arthurian legend is correct. The small, Briton hegemony he carved out did not survive him. But the Potter lands remained and, while most Britons were dispossessed when the Anglo-Saxons arrived in the Sixth Century, House Potter was shrewd enough to retain its holdings and wealth. They never vied for power and remained noblemen for whatever king ruled the lands. At first their prime estates were in Mercia and it was to that King they offered their primary allegiance.

“It was during the reign of King Aethelred the First of Mercia (665 – 704) that House Potter acquired this land. At the time, Hergred was Head of House and Altherol was his Heir. Dargoth the Lucky was the younger son of the Head and as with younger sons for ages, sought to make his own name for himself. He and twenty warrior wizards and their families built long boats and sailed down the River Avon and out to see seeking new lands. They arrived here on the Isle of Shen, which was uninhabited at the time. Dargoth claimed it for himself and set up a colony.

“Around 695, Altherol and Hergred died in battle. Hergred Potter had no children, so Dargoth returned to Mercia to fill the role as head of House Potter. He and all of his ancestors since have continued this serving in England while ruling – for lack of a better word – here.

“In 716, there was a succession crisis in Mercia, one which was mediated by Harfeld Potter, eldest son of Dargoth. The bloodless transition impressed the nobles of Mercia and upon their election of Aethelbald as King; House Potter was rewarded with exemptions for its overseas holdings. It was not true independence, but it was about as close as one could come at the time.

“From the first records of House Potter through the separation of what was then Chalenwald in 716, empires had risen and fallen and yet House Potter never lost so much of an acre of its holdings. They were then land and people rich, but poor in gold as compared to many of the other nobles about. They were also practically to a man educated and very astute statesmen for one had to be to keep one's holdings while your lands come under the rule of one kingdom or another. This state of affairs continued through the centuries. They also brought the best ideas they found elsewhere for their nominally independent fiefdom here. From the Anglo-Saxons, the Lord Potters established a legislative assembly in Chalenwald. When Mercia fell to the Norse and became part of the Danelaw in Tenth Century, the Lords Potter brought the Norse judicial system, in particular trial by jury before a magistrate. These changes allowed the Lords Potter to free themselves from the day to day affairs of all their lands and deal with the bigger issues, which were keeping their neighbors greed at bay.

“The next major events occurred in 1066.”

“Don't tell me Lord Potter was at Hastings.”

“Arguably, he had more to do with Hastings than anyone you'll read about in your histories. As you may recall, the events of 1066 followed the death of King Edward the Confessor of the restored

Anglo-Saxon rulers of England and, of course, the primary Potter lands in old Mercia. But the role of Harstig Potter begins years earlier.

“He was then an Earl of significant influence in both of our worlds. At the time, he held seats on both the non-magical Witenagamot and the very new Wizengamot. Both were councils of Noblemen who ruled England directly in the name of the King. Anyway, several years before Edward’s death, a neighboring nobleman named Tausig, who was a distant relation to the King, was granted lands nearby. This Tausig began causing trouble with his neighboring lords, including Lord Potter. Lord Potter was among a group of Noblemen who convinced the King to give Tausig the sack and banish him from England. Tausig fled to Norway once it was clear that to remain would cost him his head. As was custom, Tausig’s former lands were divided amongst his neighbors, to include Lord Potter.

“ Then in 1066, King Edward died without children. The Witenagamot happened to be in London and elected Harold Godwinson King. Now, from Lord Potter’s perspective as well as that of many magicals, this was a disaster. Godwinson might not have been a witch burning zealot, but he firmly believed that magicals should not be land owners as he felt he could not control them. Events prevented any real direct confrontation. England soon learned that both the King of Norway (with Tausig as an advisor and senior Captain) and William of Normandy also claimed their right to the throne. Harald Hardrada was a distant relation of a former king and William claimed Edward had promised the throne to him and both were preparing to invade.

“Harold Godwinson called up his levies in preparation. Now, it should be noted, the magicals were only required to show up once the enemy had landed and battle was to be joined. But the non-magicals had to show up and wait. This included significant numbers of men-at-arms from Lord Potter’s English estates who were soon being promised they could take the lands for themselves should Harold prevail.

“At this time the magicals in England were a divided group. One group (a minority of which Lord Potter was part) were landed with

many in the non-magical nobility. As men with landed estates, keeping those estates was important. The other was a scholarly class that was also land poor led by the Dumbledore family.”

“I’ve heard that name,” the Prime Minister said.

Sir Stephen nodded. “A distant descendant of that family is a wizard of some – er – concern to this day. This Dumbledore faction believed that magicals should remain aloof from the affairs of Kings and nobles save as advisors. This position meant that it was their belief that land holdings were anathema and those who held land and fought in the wars were not true wizards. One of these Dumbledores was, in fact, a principal advisor to Harold Godwinson.

“Lord Potter knew that with Godwinson as King, the estates his family had held and maintained for a thousand years would be forfeit. He also knew that the Norse King was no better as Tausig clearly coveted his lands. That left him with but one possible ally in this time of crisis.”

“William,” the Prime Minister nodded.

“Now your histories said that William mustered his soldiers and built his ships but was prevented from invading for months by ill winds. You must remember William was from the land of the Norse men in France, which is what Normandy meant. They built long ships which did not need a favorable wind if the oars were manned with a will. What really held William back were his own magical councilors. The magicals in Britain were better trained with magic than they were thanks to a school founded over one hundred years earlier and they predicted a disaster for William should William invade.

“Lord Potter arrived in Normandy and treated with William. Lord Potter would guarantee little or no resistance from the magicals of Britain provided William agreed to leave the magical nobility in possession of their estates. Lord Potter sweetened the pot by also promising to keep the King’s Peace within his lands and ensure the King’s taxes were collected and levies met. William agreed and his magicals stopped their grousing and William made final preparations.

Lord Potter, meanwhile, returned to England.

“Lord Potter led his men at the Battle of Stamford Bridge against the forces of Harold Hardrada and Tausig and they distinguished themselves. It is said that Lord Potter personally took the life of his nemesis Tausig, although that was never confirmed. Regardless, it appeared to Godwinson and the other Nobles that the Wizard Warriors had chosen their side. This also emboldened the Dumbledore faction who believed the Warriors had, by fighting for the King, chosen their path. It should be noted that the Dumbledore faction, while gifted wizards, were not warriors. Combat force required land, not wisdom and study. This other faction served in the rear of the Army as advisors and Healers for the wounded, not up front at the point of attack and greatest hazard.

“Lord Potter and his force then moved south with Godwinson upon learning that William had landed. William’s magical advisors again dithered and rather move inland, the invaders remained at their landing beaches allowing the English time to march some two hundred or more miles from Stamford Bridge to Hastings. They caught the Normans napping, and bottled them up on a narrow strip of high and easily defended ground. It looked like the Normans would suffer a fate similar to the Norse.

“And so it was that on the morning of October 14th, the Normans saw the Saxons in battle array on the high ground astride the only route inland. Many were said to be dismayed, but William took note of the banners. The Banner of Lord Potter was not upon the heights for Lord Potter and the other magical warriors had not left London with the rest of the army. Magic, therefore, would not play a part in the battle and William attacked. Now, one should note the battle was long and brutal and even after Harold lay slain, the Saxons did not give. But there was a miscommunication and a group of Saxons moved when they should have stayed in place or some such and the Normans finally broke through, routing the defenders.”

“Why is this necessary?” the Prime Minister asked.



“Lord Potter’s betrayal of Godwinson tells much of his family and its philosophy, Sir,” Sir Stephen replied. “Godwinson was a direct threat to his lands, but more important to his people who were not the quasi slaves that toiled on the neighboring lands. Their loyalty is to their people and not to any king or idea. They are shrewd politicians and have kept greedier men out of their affairs for nearly two thousand years or so. Magic alone cannot do that and has often failed, as many of the other Wizard Warriors families would learn over the next centuries. House Potter and a handful of others remain, but only House Potter remains with all of its lands intact.

“Following Hastings, the magicals of Britain swore their fealty to William. The specifics of the oath are important. They swore their loyalty to William and his family for so long as they remained upon the throne. The Wizengamot was charged with keeping the King’s Peace among the magicals. Oddly, it was not Lord Potter who had kept the magicals out of the fight, but Dumbledore who had advised Godwinson to the end who became William’s magical counselor.”

“What about the one’s from France?”

“It would seem William had little use for the cowards,” Sir Stephen said. “They were dismissed from his service. For the land holding wizards, such as Lord Potter, they were required to also see to the collection of taxes and troop levies allocated to their lands. The various Lord Potters were exceptionally good at keeping the subsequent Kings from looking in their direction. Taxes were paid on time and generally with little or no complaint. The levies were met when called. The Kings never cared where the taxes or men came from. By the time of Hastings, what is now Charenwell, being free of war and non-magical interference, had become a major trader certainly within the magical world. The Potter lands in Britain were not as burdened by taxes as their neighbors because the Potter estates paid from their gross profits, from which their lands in England were but a minor contributor. A drought might cause problems for his neighbors, but it never did for him as he had other sources from which to pay his King and keep his King out of his affairs. Likewise, his levies were often met with mercenary soldiers from all over England.

“This brings us to 1215. Even the then Lord Potter took issue with the demands made upon the nobility, and he was still part of the nobility. House Dumbledore was still an advisor to the King and was advising King John not to back down. Lord Potter and others forced the issue and from the resulting councils, King John realized that however right his counselors might be in law; he could not stand against his nobility and hope to live. It was Lord Potter, among others, who recommended compromise.”

“The Magna Carta?” the Prime Minister asked.

“I doubt the Lord Potter had a hand in its drafting, but he had a hand in convincing King John it was in the best interests of England and the Crown to sign. John was not a very grateful man, but fate had it he died in 1216. His son Henry was King, but was then but nine years of age. The Regent was a man named William Marshall, who in addition to being well acquainted with Lord Potter, was also quite aware at how near England had come to falling into anarchy and the role Lord Potter had played in avoiding it. In 1217, William Marshall granted House Potter sole authority over the Potter lands not within England itself. Charenwell became a totally independent realm. When Henry III attained his majority, he named Justin Potter Duke and replaced House Dumbledore with House Potter as his magical counsel. The descendants of Justin Potter retain that title to this day. Harry is the Twenty-Seventh Duke of Charenwell.”

“How could the ruler of a now foreign country be counselor to the King?” the Prime Minister asked.

“Recall, House Potter still held significant lands in England proper. Only Charenwell had been severed. With respect to his lands in England, Lord Potter (now Duke of Charenwell) remained a nobleman and servant of the Crown. He also retained his seats on the magical Wizengamot. While his Charenwell citizens were now independent of the Crown, his English subjects were not. Basically and probably uniquely, House Potter became part of two countries. House Potter would serve as Magical Counselor to the Crown from that day forward and has so served until 1978, regardless of the

dynasty that then held the throne. The current Duke was reinstated to his posting two weeks ago, but it is that posting that originally gave rise to my office in the Thirteenth Century. I am a British subject born upon Potter lands in England and am of magical birth. As such, as my ambassadors before me, I serve as the Crown's representative to the Duke and as liaison between the Duke and the Crown."

As the Prime Minister pondered his next question, he looked out the window of the car. They seemed to have just entered a huge construction site. The road was now much wider and on either side, tall buildings were going up. It was clear that this hive of activity extended further inland as well. "What's this?" he asked.

"It shall be called Jamestown," Sir Stephen said. "It is being built by order of the current Duke. When it's finished, it will be home to twenty thousand or more."

"Housing shortage?"

"On the contrary. He cannot hope to populate this city from the current population."

"I don't understand. Where will he get the people and why build a city for no one?"

"That's one of the things he'll explain."

"I'm sure his citizens are thrilled at footing the bill for this folly!"

"They are upset at the construction as this road does pass by some favored stretches of beach," Sir Stephen said. "But they're not complaining about the cost."

"Why not?"

"This is being built entirely from the private resources of the Duke."

"A money pit if you ask me."

“House Potter traditionally would not see it that way,” Sir Stephen said. “They have held their lands and position for two millennia. One does not do that by seeking short term gains. For House Potter, a potential profit or return on investment (with interest) two centuries down the road is sufficient justification for such investment.

“Remember, House Potter has held every acre of land it has ever acquired. Those lands have always been leased to tenants. Over time, the rents – even very low ones – do add up. The current Duke is among the wealthiest men on earth, if not the wealthiest. They have been cautious with their money and have not squandered it as have many others in their position over the centuries. A hundred million quid won’t even erase his annual interest income.”

“Bloody hell.”

“It of course helps that Charenwell has never had to invest in a military.”

“Why not?”

“This is an island hidden from the world by ancient and powerful magic for over a thousand years. Not even the Vikings found it. You and the Foreign Minister never heard of it, and you are no different than all but a handful of the billions of non-magical people in the world. In the magical world, this place is legend and myth. This country is populated mostly by witches and wizards and is therefore the most magical land on earth. But to the rest of humanity, it does not exist. No Duke has had designs for power or conquest and as no one else can come here except by leave of the Duke, there’s no reason for a force to defend this land against potential invaders because there are no potential invaders. It is therefore an amazing example of how prosperous a people could be if they were freed from the need to provide for their common defense.”

It made sense, the Prime Minister thought. Defense was not the budget item it had once been, but it was still huge and was always an item that aroused vigorous debate in the House of Commons. There

were times he wished for the American style. As Prime Minister he was a Member of Parliament as were all his Cabinet Secretaries. They could be called to “answer” at any time which while engaging could and often did devolve into shouting matches between the benches. The Americans were far more boring in that regard and had far less authority (as in practically none) to drag the President or his cabinet members before Congress. If Congress didn’t like what the President was up to, they’d legislate around it. Parliament would do that too, but only after very public arguments on the floor of the House of Commons between the Prime Minister and Members. And it was much easier for Parliament to give him the boot. His predecessor had only avoided a vote of no confidence by resigning. Oh well.

“Okay, so why is it my contact with this world is through the Ministry of Magic, but Her Majesty has the Ambassador to this country?” the Prime Minister asked.

“Remember when I said that the magicals took an oath of fealty to William of Normandy after the Battle of Hastings?”

The Prime Minister nodded.

“The oath was to be loyal to the Crown for so long as William or his heirs sat upon the throne,” Sir Stephen said. “While that may seem clear, it is actually ambiguous and in 1399 the ambiguity came into play.”

“How so”

“That was when Henry of Bolingbrook deposed King Richard II. Richard was the direct male descendant of William. His father was the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III. Bolingbrook was the eldest son of John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III. He was also not the next in line for the throne. That would have been Edmond Mortimer who was the son of Edward III’s second son.

“Most of the magicals interpreted the coronation of Henry IV as the end of the direct line from William and they would have been right. They disappeared into their world and communities and as they

survived, they were seen as not breaking their family oaths. The Wizengamot ceased being an extension of the King's authority and became the de facto and sole government over magical Britain.

“The Duke of Charenwell, however, arrived at a different conclusion. While Henry IV was not next in line for the throne, he was a descendent of William and his right to rule had been recognized by the nobility even if his rise to the throne was suspect. The Duke concluded that so long as any descendent of William ruled his oath held. The unique relationship between the Crown and Charenwell dates from 1399 when the Duke chose a different path from the rest of magical Britain. There was only the brief time of Oliver Cromwell when the Duke felt freed from his oath and stopped serving Britain in any capacity. But under the Acknowledgement of 1399, he recognized any descendant of William as a valid monarch without regard to how they attained the throne. It should be noted, every king or queen of England since William has been one of William's descendants, even if descended from a daughter line including Her Majesty.

“For almost three hundred years, however, the rest of magical Britain paid no mind nor recognized any obligations towards their non-magical neighbors. This changed in 1692 with their signing of the International Statute of Secrecy. The statute was a treaty enacted to hide our world from yours insofar as possible. However, there was a proviso. Each magical government was required to have contact with whatever non-magical government controlled the lands. That was when magical Britain created its Ministry and that Ministry saw Parliament as the legitimate governing body, not Queen Mary and King William. At the time, it was arguable whether that interpretation was correct. It certainly is correct today as Her Majesty no longer rules Britain. The government is the Parliament, not the Queen.”

“Then why hasn't House Potter...?”

“His obligation derives from a magical oath which was reaffirmed in a broader sense upon the coronation of Henry IV; that and the fact that Charenwell is not a magical country hidden within the wider world and amongst unsuspecting non-magicals. That oath recognizes the

Crown as his obligation. The Ministry's obligation is by statute, not magical oath. Even if they were mistaken at the time, they were not magically obligated to recognize the Crown. As 1399 proved, the original oath was sufficiently vague that the actions of the Wizengamot and the then Duke of Charenwell were both consistent with the oath. The Duke is obligated to serve the Queen in some capacity and recognize her as his contact with Britain. The Ministry is not so obligated and can choose to liaise, however ineptly, with your office instead."

"That explains England and Charenwell," the Prime Minister said, "what about Scotland, Ireland and Wales?"

"Going back to Hastings," Sir Stephen said, "at that time the only magicals subject to the English Crown were those in England. The others owed their loyalties to their local rulers, at least until England took over. From a magical standpoint, all the British Isles fell under English dominion during the reign of Edward I. How is unimportant, although there was a lot of double dealing going on and arguably Wales was conquered in part through the betrayal of its magicals."

"And today? Does the Ministry also liaise with the Irish Republic?"

"They seemed to have conveniently decided the Irish Republic is of no moment. Their Irish citizens might disagree, but as the Irish have no votes in the Wizengamot..."

"Why not?"

"Because they are considered a conquered people," Sir Stephen said. "The same is true for the Scots and Welsh. You may find members with family ties to those regions, but membership is derived from English wizards. The few others who have seats acquired them through political marriages and maneuvering much later. It is not a body truly representative of the magical people it rules. Then again, as it is derived from a council of nobles and its members seated by inheritance and not popular vote..."

"A House of Lords?"

Sir Stephen nodded. "With no corresponding House of Commons."

"That explains quite a bit," the Prime Minister said. "So, what about this Duke?"

"He was born and raised in Britain," Sir Stephen said. "His parents were murdered when he was an infant and he was sent to be raised – illegally, I might add – by his mother's sister who is not magical."

"Illegally?"

"Albus Dumbledore, who is head of the British Wizengamot, usurped and abused his authority and placed the boy with his non-magical relations in contravention of law, custom and the boy's parents' desires."

"And this Dumbledore...?"

"Is a direct descendant of the others I've mentioned. Being manipulative and unconcerned with the rule of law seems to run in that family," Sir Stephen shrugged. "Anyway, the current Duke is the youngest ever."

"Oh?"

"We wizards tend to live long lives for the most part. This is particularly true if we avoid wars and political intrigues, which House Potter has usually been adept at doing. This past Century has been an aberration."

"Oh?"

"Duke Charlus was married around 1916 in an arranged marriage with a British witch from an old line for political reasons. While such marriages are common even to this day back home in certain circles, it has rarely happened in Charenwell. He was killed in London in 1978 during the last magical war."



“My brief discussed that bit.”

“The war or the murder of the Duke?”

“The war. Murder?”

“The insurgents considered Lord Potter a threat,” Sir Stephen said. “He was vigorous in trying to get the magical government to deal with them forcibly and had just given a speech recommending open communication with the Crown to bring the bastards to heel. He openly advocated execution for the insurgents for their crimes. They obviously took offense. It didn’t help that the magical government looked the other way.”

“As they appear to be doing now,” the Prime Minister noted.

“Agreed,” Sir Stephen said. “That is, in fact, Her Majesty’s concern as well as that of the current Duke.

“Anyway, Charlus was succeeded by his son Charles. Charles was sixty-two when he became Duke which is considered young. The average age is over ninety. Charles had been a fighter pilot in our RAF during World War II. He died in 1988 during an epidemic in our world. He should have been succeeded by his son James, but James had been murdered in 1981 during the last wizards’ war. What should have happened then was that James’s son would have been made Duke. It would have been in name only, as the boy was only eight. That did not happen as Dumbledore had hidden the boy from everyone.”

“How?”

“Magic. He was placed with his Aunt. One of the Duke’s people knew where at first, but a spell was cast and all but Dumbledore forgot his whereabouts. There are many forms of magic that can do that, by the way. Anyway, the lad was raised non-magical until he was eleven and was sent off to school.

“Now it should be noted that Charenwell, despite being over 90 percent magical and having perhaps two thirds the number of witches and wizards as all the British Isles combined, has no magical schools of its own. Magical school starts at eleven pretty much everywhere. The children from here have attended school in the British Isles. I can't say that there's a good reason for it. Some histories suggest it was purely a question of custom while others suggest some prior Dukes felt a total break from Britain was not proper considering he had magical tenants there as well. The current Duke is set upon changing that.

“Charenwell was unaware of the Duke's status until 1991, when he started at the oldest magical school in Britain. It's called Hogwarts and is in Scotland somewhere and happens to be run by one Albus Dumbledore.”

“I get the feeling this Dumbledore is no friend of House Potter,” the Prime Minister said.

“That would seem to be the case,” Sir Stephen agreed. “The Lord Mayor made significant efforts to see to the orderly return of the lad, but was thwarted at every turn by this Dumbledore. Finally, just weeks ago, a covert operation was carried out that brought Duke Harry home at last.”

“And your assessment of him?”

“He's young,” Sir Stephen said. “He's not quite fifteen. But he's already seen combat in the magical sense and far more than most adults have. He's smart. More important, he has surrounded himself with smart and capable advisors. In the last four weeks he's done far more damage to the insurgents and their supporters than the British Magicals had managed throughout the entire last war, and all of that was in his private capacity. You will find he listens. You will also find him decisive and one who will act swiftly and forcefully if need be. Moreover, everything he's managed thus far has been on his own accounts, as it were. Thus far his actions are his own. While his government supports his actions to date, he has not asked for their commitment financially. My guess is that's about to change.”

“Her Majesty said he’s a breath of fresh air in a swamp.”

“And interesting comment,” Sir Stephen said. “The British magicals are bending over backwards to sweep their problems under the rug, as it were, and ignore it insofar as possible. They either forget that their current problems are affecting our people or they don’t care. Her Majesty takes issue with that. Duke Harry will have none of it.”

“How so?”

“I’m sure the Duke will tell us.” They had just entered the area called the pitch and Sir Stephen could not help but notice the two new Manors under construction. “Goodness,” he said, “it would seem the young Duke had been even busier than I thought!”

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in *Italics* = OCGr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin. SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew’s, SP – St. Patrick’s, SD – St. David’s. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*P2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P - girl.5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P

- boy.6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).11. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).12. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).15. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6); CONCUBINE (POTTER).16. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*P3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P - boy, girl (twins).3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott)

Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*P3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).Frank Longbottom, age 41.1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).2. Sandra

Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN: RUMOR OF WAR

THURSDAY, JULY 25th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

The Prime Minister's party was fairly large. He had with him one of his junior assistants, who it turned out was a Merlin Club type with a brother and much younger sister who were magicals. Three cabinet members were there as well, none of whom knew about magic until recently. He did not yet know why the Home Secretary was asked to attend. The Foreign Minister was little surprise given this was supposedly a foreign country and he already knew military advisors had been requested which explained the attendance of his Defense Minister, although again he did not know why.

The Prime Minister had requested the attendance of both the Head of the Special Intelligence Service (commonly known as MI-6) which handled foreign Intelligence and the Head of State Security (commonly known as MI-5) that handled internal security given the perceived situation with the magicals back home. In addition, a contingent of military personnel was with him. All were Merlin Club types. The senior officer was an Army Major General named Churchill, who assured the P.M. he was no relation to the former P.M. (at least not a close one). Three Colonels were with the General, but the P.M. knew several other Army officers were elsewhere at the invitation of this Duke. There was also an Air Force group led by Air Vice Marshall Graham. He was joined by an Air Commodore and two Group Captains, although again there was another group elsewhere.

The group was escorted into a large room by a young woman who appeared to be in her late twenties and said her name was Ms. Black and she was the Duke's Personal Secretary. There was a huge table in the room, a podium and screen at one end. The Prime Minister and his entourage were asked to take a seat and whether they would like any refreshments. Once such refreshments were presented, the first of their "opposite numbers" entered. He introduced himself to the Prime Minister as Lord Mayor Lupin, whom the P.M. knew was his counterpart in this government.

The Lord Mayor was not alone. With him was a Mr. Albert Davidson, who was the Foreign Minister. Lord Mayor Lupin explained that their

foreign office was not very large. Britain was the only non-magical country they had diplomatic relations with in any manner. They had a "Mission" with the International Confederation of Wizards which was analogous to the United Nations and consulates with the Magical Americas, France, Germany, Spain, Scandinavia and Italy. Also with him was Mr. Thomas Gage, who was about as close to their chief of intelligence as one could be.

"We have," he said, "until recently that it, had little need for such things. Even as it stands, our activities are limited to magical Britain."

Two other entered. There was a tall, young man the P.M. figured was in his twenties with red hair and a very good looking blonde woman with him. They were introduced as husband and wife. They were both employees of a bank called Gringotts which was magical and also the oldest financial institution in the world and one of the largest. They were here in part because of the Bank's interest in this meeting, but also because the young man's wife was the daughter of the current French Minister for Magic. Her father had only recently been appointed and Mr. Davidson explained that magical France might prove important going forward.

An older couple entered. They appeared to be in their thirties and were introduced as Frank and Alice Longbottom. The P.M. was told they were trained in magical combat. Finally, a large group entered. There was one very young looking lad with sixteen women, most looked too young for this sort of meeting. The young man was Lord Harry, Duke of Charenwell. One striking, brown haired young woman was introduced as Lady Hermione, Duchess of Charenwell and another very attractive young blonde as Lady Luna, Countess of Darby. These ladies were, apparently his wives. So, apparently, were the fourteen others who had entered with him.

"I figured it's best to get the shocks out front," the young man said seeing the expressions on the men across the table. "Hermione, would you please explain?"

The young woman remained standing as the young Duke and the others took their seats across from the Prime Minister and his people.



She explained first that she was born and raised outside London. She was what the magicals called Muggle Born meaning her parents were not magical. About a third of all witches and wizards were born from non-magical families, although no one knew why. She then explained the bonds in some detail. Specific origins lost to history, she explained its widespread use in magical Britain beginning around a thousand years ago due to a glut of witches.

“We have here what may be the best collection of primary source material on our history dating back to the time of the Romans of any place in Europe,” she said. “However, while we have journals and chronicles covering much and practically unbroken, what we might now consider an important fact or theme might not have been considered as worthy of mention by the ancient authors. This is indeed the problem when we speak of the glut. We know it was about a two to one disparity meaning there were two witches for every wizard regardless of their birth status. We also know the glut has continued in Britain down through the centuries while it ceased to be an issue in the rest of Europe. Finally, we know it was never as much of an issue here in Charenwell and has not been an issue in hundreds of years. What we don’t know is why it was one and why it remains one.”

“Why was it so important for a witch to be with a wizard?” one of the visitors asked.

“That we do know,” Hermione said, “rather we know what they thought at the time.”

She told them of the dual concerns about losing magic to the non-magical world and the growing hostility the non-magical world had regarding magic. While it was true that wizards remained valued members of society, the non-magicals developed an unnatural fear of witches. Hermione could only speculate as to why, but the proof were in the various pogroms. The waves of mass hysteria and persecution fell almost entirely upon perceived witches. To allow a real witch to return or expose her abilities to that climate was considered folly. Like any, one needed a man and a woman to have children. The women had to be “protected.”

Minerva and Cissy then talked about the rise of the Pureblood philosophy in Europe and Britain in particular and its affect on the witches in society. The growing belief in superiority and supremacy ideas led to the subjugation of witches over time. Where once it seemed magic was a unifying condition in their society, gender became a means of control. In some ways, the magical were far more egalitarian than their non-magical counterparts. Witches rose to the top of certain fields and with the right patronage could be significant players in others. But in all cases, their successes were due as much to the patronage of their “wizard” as to their own talents.

This led to an overview of the elites who controlled magical Britain. The government was one of the elites and for the elites and for a long while it was dominated by Purebloods, or those who had magicals as all ancestors back as many generations as were a the time politically acceptable. In general, Purebloods felt they were an entitled class, but they were not the only ones. There was an aristocratic class as well. While not so pure in blood, they had inherited their positions and their seats in the legislature and were not about to give up their traditions. One group, the Purebloods, were known as supremacists as they believed bloodlines alone determined who should rule. The aristocrats were based upon inheritance and not blood purity. They believed they deserved to rule because they had for centuries. They were derisively known as Traditionalists, although there was really little difference between the factions. While it was noted that not all who “qualify” as either Purebloods or Aristocrats supported these views, far too many did. Under either view, women were second class citizens.

Basically who and how far a witch could go in magical Britain was decided by her wizard Patron be it her father, husband, Head of House or the man who held her title as his concubine. The presenters were certain that they always contrasted magical Britain with Charenwell where the situation was as different as night was from day.

“If there are not the same problems here,” one of the visitors asked, “then why are there concubines?”

“Ah!” Harry replied. “Many reasons and we believe in comparison mostly virtuous given the fact that our laws have not allowed for the abuses. First of all, plural marriage has never been illegal in our culture, just impractical. The Dukes have bonded with Concubines in part to ensure an heir. My own Great-great grandmother was one. Second, bringing in women from abroad necessarily brings in new bloodlines and as important new ideas. We are very isolated here and always have been. Were we populated solely with the descendants of the original colonists, we might well have died out or lost our magic centuries ago. Instead, we are apparently more magical than average.

“Then there is the fact that due to our custom of educating abroad there has been throughout most of our history a constant emigration abroad. Until fairly recently, when a child left for school most did not return. To be honest that was more due to the difficulties of travel than any other reason. In 1850 the population of this island was only around 15,000.”

“And now there are over 40,000?” the Prime Minister asked. “What happened? Larger families?”

“No larger than in the past,” Harry said. “Changes in transportation allowed more and more of our people to return home. We have historically made it difficult to get here. Wars both magical and non-magical have ravaged Europe and we have always remained untouched by them directly. We have sent troops off to the defense of Britain. I’m told we currently have a few of our people serving in Her Majesty’s Armed Forces...”

“I being one of them,” a man in an Army uniform said. “Colonel Mark Howe, Sir. My family is from Port of Darby, Sir!”

“For example,” Harry chuckled, “Colonel Howe here. My Grandfather was another. He was in your R.A.F. throughout World War II. Still, transportation has been the primary reason why we were a net exporter of magicals for centuries. It was never truly economic. Only about one third of the land here is developed in any manner and we have always produced more than we need from it. We have been

the major agricultural supplier for magical Britain and much of magical Europe for centuries and currently export six times what we need. Thus, there was always a home for our people should they choose to return and jobs as well.

“Transportation was the problem. As Colonel Howe is probably quite aware, magical transport has been far quicker and still is far quicker than non-magical. But it is incredibly inefficient.”

“How so?” the Prime Minister asked.

“Two summers ago,” Harry said, “magical Britain hosted the Quidditch World Cup. It’s not unlike the event in football. Around one hundred thousand fans attended the match. If this were football, how long would it take to move those hundred thousand from their homes all over the world to the pitch?”

“Not long,” the Prime Minister said. “Assuming they got convenient flights, that number would hardly tax Heathrow, or our public transport or hotels.”

“And how involved would your government be in the transportation and lodgings?”

“Not very,” the Prime Minister said. “The Olympics are a major investment, but that’s because most countries lack the facilities in the same location and everyone wants to out do the last country who hosted them. Unless we were to decide to build a new football pitch, which seldom happens, our primary involvement would be security.”

“That’s because your economy has produced efficient and global mass transit. Moving thousands or even millions of people is not an issue because the economy does that every day. Our world has no such system. Our Ministry was involved in every aspect of that event from building the pitch, to securing lodgings, to supplying food and water, to transporting all in attendance. It took them over a year to get ready, and even then most of us had to camp out. It took over two weeks to get the hundred thousand to the site and slightly less time for them to get home.

“We can move small numbers vast differences very quickly. But what you would consider an average day of moving people we can’t do with magic. Moreover, magic is useless at moving bulk cargo. My country is magical in the extreme as compared to the rest of the world, yet our exports and imports are by sea on ships. Our crops are harvested by machines. They are transported to where they are made into bread or whatever by lorry. Our exports travel from there to our port by train and to the world on ships. We can’t magic tons of goods anywhere quickly. And with magic there are similar limitations moving people.

“Apparition is one form of magical transit. I can apparate from here to anywhere in this country. However, it takes training and there are a lot of quite capable magicals who can’t do it. Even if you can, you can only take yourself and – maybe – one other person. Furthermore, magical barriers that prevent that form of transit are quite easily made and sustained. Finally, it is relatively short ranged: a powerful wizard might be able to travel four hundred miles over land, less than half that across water.

“Portkeys are a magic device with unlimited range and can bring a few people at a time. But they are hard to make and can only be used once – twice if they are a ‘return’ portkey which would take you there and back again. It would be like having to build a new plane every time one left.

“Finally, there is a magical transit system called the Floo. It’s the easiest to use, but can only take you from one place on the network to another on the network and it can only handle one person at a time between those two places. That and it’s relatively new. It was invented in the Seventeenth Century. We didn’t start setting one up here until over a hundred years later and it wasn’t until 1850 that we set up a dedicated connection between here and a location we controlled in London.

“Prior to our London Floo connection, our children left for school by ship. They’d arrive in Plymouth and have to take other transport from there to their schools, which might be as far away as Scotland.

Basically, once they left home at age eleven, they were gone until they finished school. Given seven years in Britain, many chose not to return at all.”

“Hence your historic concubines,” the Prime Minister said.

“Among the other reasons, yes,” Harry replied.

“I take it we’re not here about the concubine issue,” the Prime Minister said.

“No,” Harry replied. “It is a symptom of the problem we seek to solve. My actions in that regard are a small part of a larger scheme. When I learned of it from Dora, whom I inherited, and when I learned who might be sold off this year – many are my friends – and when I learned far more about the ills of that society, destroying that aspect of it was something I could do now, but it alone is of little moment.

“So what are we here about, then?”

“You’ve heard of Voldemort?”

“He’s supposed to be dead!”

“That is what the Ministry wants everyone to believe,” Harry said, “or at least they used to. I have no idea if they still feel that way. The truth is he’s not and never has been. The story is not that important. He has returned, and that is the problem.

“Voldemort is the leader of the Supremacist movement for all practical purposes. It’s ironic, as he’s less of a Pureblood than I am, and I am most definitely not one. His followers believe he is leading them to their rightful place as rulers of the magical world. His followers believe under him all Muggle Borns will be proper slaves. The truth is his real aim is total dominion. He considers Muggle Borns ‘unnatural’ and ‘abominations’ and would see them as at best slaves and at worst exterminated from the earth. His slave class would be the non-magicals of the world.”

“That’s preposterous!” someone said.

“And delusional,” Harry agreed, “and ultimately suicidal for magical kind. We see a move against your world as self-inflicted genocide. A war with your world would be destructive for you, but it would be the end of us. Magic cannot stand up to modern technology, particularly if you learn what you’re up against. You have more in your army than all of the magicals in Britain combined without regard to their age or ability, and most of them are law abiding people who want nothing to do with any of this. Yet I fear should Voldemort move as he’d like, they would be the first to die in large numbers.

“Unfortunately for all of us, Voldemort and his lot do not see reason and will not capitulate. To become a follower requires willing and eager commission of capital crimes against his perceived enemies, meaning Muggle Borns and non-magicals. In the end, I see no option that could ensure peace between us so long as any of them remain alive and at large. They must be wiped out to the last one of them.

“The problem is, they are only part of the problem. The Traditionalists, led by Albus Dumbledore are also a threat to all of us. While they would not enslave by force and terror, they believe only they are fit to rule us all. They would act from behind the scenes through manipulation, trickery and when needed magic. But call it what they will, it is still slavery for their system robs the rest of us of our will to act. While they are not violent, they are a real and present threat to freedom and they too must be delegated to the dust bin.

“You must understand, Sir, they represent a minority of our world both in numbers and opinion. Maybe one in ten of the magical in Britain are either with them or sympathetic to their aims. But their supporters control the government and there is no mechanism that would allow the rest of the well meaning, law abiding and peaceful members of our society to oust them. Neither the Ministry nor the Wizengamot are elected to their stations and they answer only to themselves and those whose bribes are largest.

“The two factions are now vying for total control of the government to advance their elitist agendas. Their success, should it come to

pass, does not bode well. Both sides believe in their absolute superiority, invulnerability and that their way is the only way. Neither group believes the rest of us pose any threat to them because neither side has ever ventured out among their own kind, much less the world at large. That is a very arrogant and dangerous attitude which can only lead to ruin. It is this ruin Her Majesty and I seek to avoid.”

“I noticed you didn’t say we,” the Prime Minister said.

“My apologies,” Harry replied. “But I do not want to leave you with the impression we are asking you to solve our problems. We are asking you for certain assistance that will allow us to solve this problem ourselves.”

“Why so indirect?”

“We wish to prevent this crisis from spreading,” Remus said. “So long as it remains mostly confined to the magical world, it can be contained within Britain until dealt with. The last thing any of us should want is any sympathy for magical Britain from the other magical governments. Right now, the Magical British government is not highly respected across the Channel or anywhere else for that matter. For years the International Confederation of Wizards – which is similar to your United Nations – has been headed by Dumbledore. He has used that position to prevent any scrutiny of the goings on in Britain by the international community while they have not been able to avoid their similar treaty obligations or scrutiny. As a result of some of Lord Potter’s recent actions in this crisis, Dumbledore has been ousted. Needless to say, the rest of the magical world is not predisposed to help either him or his government.

“But direct non-magical intervention would change that immediately. Any acknowledgment or actions that would show you know of magic would prompt a response from the magical world at large. Our world exists, for better or for worse, because we’ve remained secret from the rest of the world. This might not be the best policy and times might well have changed such that this policy is no longer valid, but it is the policy and the magical will side with Britain to keep magic secret. That would necessitate an unacceptable widening of the crisis



and would probably lead to what we seek to avoid: open conflict between our worlds.”

“Add to it the fact,” Harry added, “that while the vast majority of the magicals in Britain probably would not waste their energy supporting the Ministry or the two factions ordinarily, we can’t be sure they would not resist non-magical intervention. The need for the separation of our worlds is taught from the moment we start school, even earlier if we were raised in that world. Whether that need is real or paranoid nonsense is not as important as the fact that most magicals believe it is real. They would support their would-be oppressors which would only make things worse.”

“So why are we here?” the Prime Minister asked.

“I came here myself for the first time June 23rd,” Harry chuckled, “and I still find myself asking that question. Mind you, most of what you’ve heard so far I knew nothing about then. Didn’t even know about Concubines. Apparently, as active as that market is, we muggle-raised types are considered unworthy of playing in that field. I knew about Voldemort, of course. Kind of hard not to when I’ve had to face him in battle five times to date.”

“Bloody hell!” Colonel Howe said.

“Him,” Harry continued, “a troll or two, a basilisk, couple of dragons, more acromantulas than I care to remember, scores of dementors a dozen Death Eaters...”

“Death Eaters?” the Prime Minister asked.

“Voldemort’s shock troops,” Colonel Howe explained. “They’re terrorists of the worst sort and most magicals are not about to stand in their way. Most who do wind up dead in short order. As for the other stuff, let’s just say Lord Potter here has seen more magical combat than any of us have seen our kind, even Colonel Sport and Social.”

“He kill anyone?” another Colonel asked.

“A few,” Harry shrugged. “Not counting Voldemort three times to date, I killed my first wizard when I was eleven...”

“He was trying to kill you, Harry,” Hermione added.

“There was that,” Harry agreed. “Sport and Social?”

“S.A.S.,” Hermione said. “Daddy was a Captain in that unit before he met my Mum. He doesn’t talk about it.”

“Granger?” another colonel asked. “Wouldn’t be Robert Granger, would it?”

Hermione nodded.

“Bloody hell! He was my first C.O. when I came over from the Paras! Colonel Jasper Wilson, Ma’am. ‘Though your Old Man probably would remember me as Duffer.”

“Duffer?”

“Your Dad still plays golf?”

Hermione nodded.

“He was pretty good. I wasn’t. That and the first time we were on the shooting range I missed the bull once. Embarrassing.”

“Pleased to meet you, Colonel,” Hermione said. “I’m sorry my folks aren’t here. With the troubles, they’re off on holiday.” There was a hint of sadness in her voice.

“Can we get back on point?” the Prime Minister said. “Or would now be a good time to break for lunch?”

“The reason we asked you here won’t take much longer,” Harry said. “To summarize, there’re some right nasty bastards in Magical Britain

who are a threat to us all. The Ministry of Magic either will not or cannot do anything about it. The government is nothing more than a social club for hereditary elites who milk the vast majority of their citizens and they are with little or no recourse to prevent it.

“We’ve concluded the current crisis will not resolve itself without ‘outside’ intervention of sorts. Moreover, to resolve this crisis and leave its cause in place simply delays what needs to be done.”

“What’s that?”

“First priority is the destruction of Voldemort and his Death Eaters. This will be total destruction. The magicals cannot be counted on to bring the bastards to justice as the bastards all but own the government already through their families. Dumbledore and his faction need to be destroyed as well as they are not much better. Again, we can’t count on magical Britain to do anything. As the government perpetuates the conditions that gave rise to this entire mess in the first place, it too has to go. But I’m getting way ahead of myself.

“As soon as I realized I had means at my disposal to knock them back on their heels, I took it to them,” Harry said. He then described his economic attacks to date on the Death Eaters and their supporters and Dumbledore. He followed it with the Concubine Auction and the reparations demanded from the Ministry for the illegal sale of Charenwell witches with the still pending threat of more serious economic sanctions and embargos.

“The purpose of these measures was to break them financially,” Harry continued. “They need money to engage in their more direct and dangerous activities. Our estimates are the Death Eater organization is now practically broke and Dumbledore and his organization soon will be.”

“And your demands on their Ministry? What was that about?” the Prime Minister asked.

“If you were in my position, Prime Minister, what would you have done? What would you have done if you learned your people were being kidnapped and sold into practical slavery and that those actions were practically sanctioned by a foreign government?”

“A lot more than ask for reparations!”

“Unlike Great Britain,” Harry said, “Charenwell lacks all the instruments of – er – persuasion. At this time, we have no weapons other than economic. As was discussed before, our wards and location have made this country all but immune from foreign adventurers. We’ve had no need for an army even for our common defense.”

“Until now,” the Prime Minister began.

“From a defense standpoint,” Harry said, “nothing has changed. Magical Britain – even all of magical Europe – pose no direct threat to us. There are things that could give us problems. My biggest fear is how the non-magicals would react to a general war between our worlds. This is something we wish to avoid at all costs if possible. While we may be practically immune from attack, we are not immune from – er – secondary effects such as total economic collapse on a global scale or the effects I once read might be the result of a large scale nuclear war. One of the reasons we wish the current troubles in Britain to be confined to Britain and mostly to magical Britain is to avoid any risk of escalation. I am doing what I can with the tools I have, Sir.”

“And what do you hope to accomplish with what you have done,” a man asked. “I’m Sir Howard Michael, Foreign Secretary.”

“Thank you, Sir Michael,” Harry said. “The economic attack, for lack of a better word, is a delaying tactic. While the various factions have been hurt, neither Voldemort nor Dumbledore will back down. We estimate Voldemort was a year or so away of toppling the existing government. He’s lost ninety percent of his finances. He has also recently lost over two thirds of his combat force in efforts directed against me personally. That was more bad luck on the part of his

forces than any brilliance on my part or on the part of his other adversaries. He, however, does not concede defeat. He could lose everything but so long as he remains, he sees himself as undefeated. But he has been delayed. It will take him some time to recover to his setbacks over the last month or so.

“The others were attacked as well because, as I said, they must be dealt with in the end as well. Magical Britain cannot be allowed to continue as it has in the past. It is their traditional culture that gave birth to this crisis. Their arrogance and lack of any understanding of the rest of the world led us to today. If that society is allowed to remain both unchallenged and unbowed, then defeating the current threat is merely a delaying tactic. I will not pass this problem off to a future generation if it can be dealt with now – or in the near future at any rate.

“By hitting the others, I’ve kept any of those groups from gaining an upper hand. The sanctions against the Ministry are justified under our international law. But they have the added benefit of preventing both Dumbledore and Voldemort from recovering quickly. I have very recently learned that certain less than honest and high ranking officials in that government have diverted public funds to one or the other of those groups over the years. It’s kind of hard to divert funds you don’t have.”

“How recently?” Hermione asked.

“There was a report on my desk this morning from Mr. Gage, the Lord Mayor’s intelligence chief,” Harry replied. “The actions we have taken to date all fall within things I could do in my private capacity or demands I could make as Duke,” Harry continued. “However, as you probably can imagine, these actions alone will not resolve the current crisis. Our plans going forward will require at a minimum coordination and consultation with your government for starters and probably a little more.”

“Explain,” the Prime Minister said. While he was hungry, this was what he was here to find out.

“With the magical government and the factions temporarily – um – broken,” Harry said, “we intend to begin an evacuation from Britain...”

“Evacuation? You expect us to leave?” a man said. He was the Home Secretary.

“That would be impossible on many levels and unnecessary,” Harry said. “No, by evacuation we are talking about magicals and their families. Specifically we are talking about that segment of the magical population at greatest risk in the current crisis. It is our intention to conduct a voluntary evacuation of all Muggle Borns and their families as they are the ones who are and will suffer the most.”

“If they are magicals then is this of concern to us?” the Home Secretary asked.

“We would appreciate some assistance in this,” Harry said. “While I think it is not absolutely necessary, it would expedite the process. Despite the fact that the primary evacuees are magical, you must understand that by Muggle Born we mean first generation magic. The evacuation is not limited to them, but they define the population to be moved. We intend to evacuate them, their husbands, wives, children, parents, brothers and sisters, the whole lot. All of them are at risk.”

“How many?”

“We don’t have precise numbers yet,” Daphne replied. “Our estimates range from as few as twenty thousand...”

“Twenty thousand?!”

She nodded, “... to more than double that number.”

“That’s what all that construction on the coast is about?” the Prime Minister noted.

Harry nodded. “We are not bringing them here as refugees. We intend for them to live as normal a life as possible. That new city will have several manufacturing plants, plus everything else a city should

have. There will be jobs, schools, a hospital, shops, restaurants, the works.”

“You said earlier magical transport can’t move large numbers effectively,” the senior Air Force officer noted.

“The only magical means of evacuation would be our Floo connection in London. That would not be a good idea. Were we to use that, the elitists would find out. It would be kind of hard to disguise a long queue at an otherwise forgettable travel office in the middle of the largest magical shopping district in Britain. To put it simply, we’re talking an evacuation that could ultimately involve a third of the total magical population. That’s one third of their businesses, tax payers and such leaving in short order.”

“And well over half of the Ministry’s tax base,” Bill Weasley added. “The Muggle Borns in that world are generally the lower income levels due to discriminatory practices and the fact that many do not have family wealth of their own. Despite that, they pay the lion’s share of the taxes.”

“How do they bloody put up with that?” asked a man named Mr. Moore who was head of State Security (MI-5).

“Considering it’s less than half what they’d pay on your economy, they probably think they’re getting a good deal,” Bill shrugged. “Obviously, we are of the opinion that the magical government might take exception to losing its most certain revenue source. Hence, it is prudent that the Muggle Borns just disappear – at least as far as the rest of our world is concerned.”

“And how will they just disappear?” the Prime Minister asked.

“First off,” Harry replied, “we have to convince them to relocate. This is not going to be done by force. For those living on our side of the line, as it were, we’ll try and do the convincing. Then again, it might not take much as they are probably well aware of the problems. Our Foreign Office is handling that?” he added turning to Remus.

“It is,” Remus said.

“But,” Harry continued, “and I don’t have specific numbers yet – a significant number of the Muggle Borns and families live on your side of the line in your economy. Astoria?”

The Prime Minister saw a young woman stand. She had to be one of the youngest in the room. “We are compiling a list,” she said. “Names, addresses and such. Thus far, we have accurate information on all Muggle Borns age eighteen and younger and a fair bit on those under age twenty-five.”

“And how are you getting this information?” the MI-5 man asked.

“For lack of a better word, we have people who are stealing it for us,” Astoria said. “Most of it is public, just not looked at. But the information on those non-magical families with magical children under age eleven is most secret. Still, we have a list of all magical children born as of June 1st. Our relocation priorities are all families associated with a magical child age eighteen or younger first and the older families later. Moreover, our definition of ‘at risk’ families is broader than the magical British definition of Muggle Born. We include anyone with at least one Muggle parent within this at risk group; not just those whose parents are both non-magical.

“There is an issue with this prioritization. When we are dealing with non-magical parents who have no magical children age eleven and older, they know nothing about magic. The policy in magical Britain is they are not to be told until the child turns eleven, which is one of the reasons why the lists regarding those families are secret. As part of her former duties as Headmistress of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Minerva was tasked with breaking this news to such families each year.

“We believe that those who are magical will be the ones most likely to relocate without much persuasion. Those families who have school aged children may require additional convincing, which is where we would appreciate your government’s ideas and help. Those who will be learning of magic the first time when we arrive to try and convince



them that their lives are in danger we feel will be the hardest to convince. Again, Harry hopes your government can be of assistance.”

“And just how will they leave assuming they choose to?” the Prime Minister asked.

“We are in the process of acquiring aircraft,” Remus said. “We received delivery of the first two of ten Q300 turboprop passenger aircraft from Bombardier Aerospace this morning. One of Lord Potter’s non-magical companies is currently arranging for gate facilities at Heathrow and Dublin...”

“Dublin?” the Foreign Secretary. “Why Dublin?”

“Magical Britain consists of the entirety of the British Isles,” Remus said. “The Home Rule Acts and subsequent independence of the Republic of Ireland did not change the national boundaries in our world.”

“Are you speaking with them at all?”

“Our only relationship outside our own world is with Her Majesty, Prime Minister,” Remus said. “What’s more, the British Ministry of Magic does not consider the Irish Republic to constitute a legitimate government with whom they are obligate to maintain some minimal communications.”

“A fact that the I.C.W. takes issue with,” Mr. Davidson, Charenwell’s Foreign Minister added.

“Bloody hell!” the Prime Minister exclaimed. “You want us to deal with them as well?”

“We may need to in time,” Harry said. “But we think we can handle this aspect without their assistance. It’s one of the reasons we’re asking for assistance on your side of the border. That will free up some of our people to deal with the magicals in the Irish Republic. We also would appreciate your assistance in arranging transport for

those who agree to relocate from their homes to Heathrow. We will pay those costs, naturally.”

“And your plan?” the Prime Minister asked.

“We should be able to begin evacuation flights in about a month,” Remus said. “By then we should have the planes and pilots. The real issue is housing on this end. No one will be relocated unless there is housing available here. Lord Harry is not about to set up refugee camps unless it is absolutely necessary, which it is not at this time. That being said, once the evacuations begin, we expect to be able to accommodate between a thousand and fifteen hundred new arrivals per week without stressing the system. Depending upon the final numbers involved, we anticipate the complete evacuation can be accomplished within the next six to ten months, with subsequent and much more limited evacuations to follow as new magical families are identified.”

“I’m still curious as to why all this is necessary,” Albert Clark who was the Home Secretary said. “I understand you do not think we are capable of safeguarding the lives of our own people.”

“Not efficiently,” Harry said. “You might be able to if you knew exactly when and where the enemy would strike and if you deployed a score of armed men who would shoot to kill to the targeted location. As we see it, to avoid this on your own, each family would need a protection detail not unlike what you provide Her Majesty, and even then the enemy might enjoy an occasional success.”

“A bullet will kill a wizard,” Colonel Howe said. “But a wizard can get behind us before we even know he’s about.”

“Still, why?” the Home Secretary asked. “What’s so bloody important about these people?”

“The Pureblood elites see them as abominations against nature,” Cissy said. “The Muggle Borns are living proof of their own ... inadequacies and they see them as subhuman threats. The families that gave birth to them are threats as well. In the Death Eater ranks,

one earns his mark by killing a Muggle Born and preferably their family.”

“And that was the state of things during our last war with them,” Frank Longbottom said. “They suffered horribly then.”

“And there have already been attacks with this new lot,” Dora added. “Not many, but enough to show anyone who remembers that the dark times are returning.”

“And what is the Ministry of Magic doing?” the Prime Minister asked.

“They see it as mere criminal activity and random acts of violence,” Dora said.

“Just as they did the last time,” Frank added. “To them, the fate of Muggle Borns is of little real importance.”

“WHY NOT!?”

“The Ministry is run by Purebloods and Aristocrats,” Dora said. “The rest of us have no voice and therefore, unless we have deep pockets we don’t matter to them.”

“It was only when the Death Eaters began killing Purebloods who opposed them that anyone at the Ministry sat up and took notice,” Frank sighed.

“And the current Minister is even weaker willed than those who held office back then,” Dora added.

“Basically, if we do nothing the Muggle Borns and their families will face extermination within a few years,” Hermione said.

“That’s it!” the Prime Minister shouted. “We have enough trouble with the genocidal nonsense in Bosnia! I will NOT have it happening on our shores, regardless of any other considerations, Mr. Clark.”

“All I sought, Minister,” Mr. Clark replied calmly, “was a concise statement as to what we were facing. We seemed to be dancing around the real issue. Now that it’s out in the open, I agree. I further agree that we should seek to resolve this magical issue through magical means unless there is no other alternative.”

“Agreed,” the Defense Minister said. “Goodness knows we don’t want all of Britain becoming another Belfast.”

“Right then,” the Prime Minister said, “Mr. Clark?”

“Sir.”

“Any idea how many Merlin Club types work for you?”

“To be honest, Sir, until a couple of days ago I had no idea what that meant. No Sir, I do not. I think it would be wise to assume we are not talking about a large number. I would recommend each of the departments determine what they have in that regard and we consolidate all except absolutely essential personnel into some outfit to assist in this matter. We may want to expand that net further and look to the various Police departments, military and so on.”

“You do realize, Minister,” his assistant added, “we will need to bring in the Leader of the Loyal Opposition and quite possibly our opposite numbers in his Shadow Cabinet.”

“That’s all I bloody need,” the Prime Minister grouched. “But you’re right Jason.”

The caravan of vehicles headed out from the Manor following a very nice lunch on a veranda overlooking some gardens. In one of the cars transporting the Prime Minister’s party sat the two senior military officers and their principal assistants. The senior officer present was Major General John Churchill, a last name which had been a thorn in his side most of his career as he always seemed to have to explain he was not related to the famous Prime Minister. His counterpart from the Air Force was Air Vice Marshall Ed Graham.

Both men had been in the service for well over twenty years and had spent most of the time bouncing back and forth between postings in Britain and “front line” duties in Northern Germany where they trained and waited to fight a war with the Russians that never came. Their wars began a few years earlier in a desert far removed from the lush, green fields of the German Plain.

Major General Churchill was a tanker and had served in tanks since leaving Sandhurst all those years ago. In 1990, he commanded an armored Brigade in the British First Armored Division and rode his Challenger tank through the desert on the right flank of the American General Schwarzkopf’s great “End Run” around the Iraqi army in Kuwait. Bloody Yanks got to tangle with the only Iraqi’s who bothered to put up a fight. His unit smoked a few horrible outdated T-55’s here and there, but otherwise seemed to spend their time directing Iraqi soldiers to the camps in the rear. Even then, his war lasted less than four days.

Air Vice Marshall Graham was in that war too. But, after years of flying the Tornado, when the shooting started he was on the Air Staff in Saudi Arabia, one of many officers planning target packages. Basically he and others like him decided what to bomb, when to bomb it and whether it needed bombing again. He knew it was an important job in the big scheme of things as did all the pilots assigned to that glorified tent in the desert. Like the others, regardless of what country they served, he would rather have been one of the young men doing the dropping than on the ground pushing the paper.

The two senior officers had only just met. To be honest, the only thing they or any on their accompanying staffs’ had in common was that they were all Merlin Club, as in either they were magical, they married a magical, they had a magical child or magical sibling. Air Vice Marshall Graham had married the love of his life who turned out to be a witch. Major General Churchill, on the other hand, had a younger brother and sister who were magical, as well as his own son and daughter. They both knew about magic, but what a magical country needed from the conventional Muggle military was anyone’s guess.

They discussed it on their short drive and quickly ruled out they would have any real involvement in the evacuation, unless they themselves

qualified as potential evacuees. But, both had brought even more service men and women with them who had left South Farm even earlier than they did. Most of those officers and NCOs were either technicians or had significant experience training soldiers and airmen. The two senior officers agreed that probably had something to do with this odd trip. But it still left questions unanswered.

“I must admit, Ed,” Major General Churchill said, “when I was told the lad wasn’t yet sixteen I was expecting someone not unlike my son at his age. The lad seems much older.”

Air Vice Marshall Graham nodded. “A month ago there’s nothing. He knew nothing about what he told us, or precious little. Now all this? It’d take us months, if not years to do as much.”

“Ah! But we’d not be paying for it from our own wallet, would we? If it were us, a good idea would have to be written down, sent up the chain-of-command and re-written every step of the way until it landed on the desk of the right senior officer who’d then send it out for staffing. Months later, it’d come back, barely recognizable and woefully and unnecessarily complicated before being sent to the money people who’d cut and paste and cut some more, without regard to anything really, and you’re left with something that makes no sense at all and costs way too much. And that’s before it’s sent to the government! His way is far more efficient. It eliminates a lot of unnecessary rubbish and ...”

“And the need of every staff officer to put in his bit so that his boss thinks he actually works for a living,” Ed Graham added. “It’s a wonder we ever had an Empire.”

“And I’m guessing we’re another one of those good ideas the lad came up with. Let’s just hope Staff is kept out of it.”

“Unless they’re like us, they can’t get in,” Ed said. “Still ... I can guess why the Army is here. He said something about his people solving this little problem and his other comments suggest a military solution but his tactics suggest he’s nowhere near ready.”

“They got bloody magical combat types,” the General said. “My briefing book said those Longbottoms and that Dora woman are combat trained. What would they need with my lads?”

Ed shrugged. “As little as that makes sense, why is the Air Force here? I honestly doubt we can teach them a thing or two about broomsticks. What’s this place?” he finished as their car had entered the base.

“Looks like a military base of some sort,” the General said. “Uniform looking buildings with numbers and whatnot. No soldiers, though.”

The car pulled up to a large, brick building. It was the only one they had seen. They were told they had arrived at their destination. They exited the building and looked around. In the distance, they saw a building with a large sign that said “Flight Operations” on it. Above the main door of the building they were to enter was another sign. It read: “Headquarters. RDCAF.”

Before either man could comment, a drone of engines caught their attention and they saw a flight of four bi-planes with British insignia pass overhead nearby.

“I guess we now have some idea why you’re here, Ed,” the General laughed.

The Prime Minister and his people, with a much larger number of military personnel, were led to a large theater like room. It resembled a theater in many ways, except it had large windows which looked out upon the airfield. As they entered, were they to look out (and some did) they would have seen a Lancaster Bomber taking off with a flight of four Tiger Moths waiting their turn on the taxi way.

Harry and his entourage entered next. The non-magicals could not miss the fact that Harry and seven of his ladies had changed from their more business like attire into what looked like RAF uniforms. They all had the stripes of a Flying Officer (the lowest grade of Commissioned Officer) and pilots wings. While his people sat in the

front two rows on one side of the auditorium, Harry mounted the stage.

“Prime Minister Major, Gentlemen,” he began, “welcome to RAF Pottersport.” Harry then gave them a brief history of the base, the role Charenwell played during the Second World War in the defense of Britain and his Grandfather’s personal contributions to that great crusade, as he called it.

“I take it there’s a reason we’re here?” the Prime Minister said.

Harry nodded. “What we’ve discussed so far is the current state of affairs in magical Britain as we understand them – and we believe we have a good handle on that – and actions I’ve taken or am taking to ... change things. Despite what we can do right now and are doing, none of these actions are likely to significantly change things back home for the better. At best, what we’ve done and are doing merely keeps it from getting worse any time soon.

“The most immediate threat to all is Voldemort and his Death Eaters. They’ve suffered severe setbacks recently, but are not out of it. Even with the losses his combat teams suffered and massive loss of supplies and funds, he still has at least three or four hundred marked followers. Those are the worst of the bastards, gentlemen. To get their marks – as we’ve said – they have to be cold blooded killers and prove that they are. We can’t very well let them run about just ‘cause their not as likely to make a move to take over as they were a month ago.

“Dumbledore is also still a threat. Bastard can’t help himself. He’s suffered some major blows, but he never needed the money the other group needed and unfortunately he’s not dead. The slick bastard will recover and will get back to his plans for world domination by stealth.

“The reason both of these vile ones will recover in time is because the people tasked with stopping them won’t. The magical government of Britain is functionally and mentally incapable of taking any action against major families; and it’s the major families that are the bulk of the two evil bastards’ followers. So long as the government of



magical government remains committed – as it has for hundreds of years – to the preservation of the interests of a few rather than the protection and interests of all, this crisis remains.

“The bottom line, gentlemen, is this: First, Voldemort and his Death Eaters must be wiped out. Second, Dumbledore and his followers must be utterly defeated, even if this also means wiping them out. Finally, unless you want your grandchildren or great-grandchildren meeting with me or my heir some years down the road to deal with the same nonsense again, the government of magical Britain must be replaced and governing class stripped of its privileges. A government that represents and protects the interests of all the people must be set up and, through education and other means sustained until such time as that is what expected.

“Unfortunately, we currently lack the tools necessary to do this.

“In 1805,” Harry continued, “the Crown called upon the Duke to honor his ties and send men to fight Bonaparte. Our Duke responded sending a regiment of infantry and a company of cavalry. They were mostly magical, but fought with the same weapons as the rest of the British Army. Their magic made them less susceptible to illness and their doctors and healing techniques meant our wounded soldiers most often recovered. They fought with distinction in Spain and later at the Battle of Waterloo. In 1914, your King called upon us again, and another regiment went to France, only to be slaughtered at the Somme as were so many others. We answered the call a third time in 1939, sending well more than a thousand into His Majesty’s Armed Forces to fight the Germans. But between your country’s calls, we’ve maintained no army whatsoever.

“Now a civil war is raging – for lack of a better word – in magical Britain and it threatens your country just as much if not more so than Bonaparte or the Germans. We believe we can help you win this conflict. We want to help you and are offering our help. Our problem is we don’t have an army.”

“And that’s where we come in?” Major General Churchill asked.

“You’ve been in the business, General,” Harry replied. “You guys know what’s what.”

“We not in the magical war business.”

“Ah! Yes ... well. Fewer than ten percent of all magicals can qualify for magical combat training,” Harry replied. “You gotta be really good and really smart.”

“And why is that?” the Prime Minister asked.

“This is a wand,” Harry said. “Don’t worry, it’s not loaded.”

“And what is a wand aside from wizard kit?” the Defense Minister asked.

“A magical device tailed to the wizard,” Hermione replied, “crafted to all expressive magic to be focused and directed in a coherent form to achieve a desired result.”

“The text book answer,” Harry chuckled. “It’s a tool for spell casting. Now, each spell is unique and is cast at least slightly differently than any other. To finish school, we learn ... what’s the standard?”

“Three hundred individual spells,” Minerva replied, “mostly in charms and transfiguration and the remainder in defensive magic, our version of your basic self defense.”

“How many to make Auror?” Harry asked.

“Figure you almost double it, and perfect many of the ones you learned before,” Dora said.

“And, I guess it’s kinda like learning to read and write Chinese,” Harry said. “We learn one spell at a time before moving on to the next one in each discipline. That takes a long time. How long to train for Basic Auror? That’s our police/soldier type right out of initial training,” Harry added.

“Three years,” Dora said, “although figure another three before they are fully qualified on average.”

“You see our problem?” Harry asked. “We need more than a handful of folks and we sure can’t wait until 2002 or later.

“But, if you must know, guns are quite effective against wizards.”

“So you want a conventional ground force?” the General asked. “Tanks and artillery too?”

“Er ... you’re way ahead of me. I can’t see a need for tanks. We need infantry mainly.”

“Will they get any magical training?”

“Yes Sir,” Dora said. “First aid, some close combat stuff. Those are easy enough to work in, we think.”

“And there’s also the issue of range,” Harry continued. “Up close, this wand is a deadly weapon. Much beyond twenty meters ... well while some spells can get that far, you can’t hit much. Aim’s right terrible for all but an area spell and those aren’t generally as useful. A rifle, on the other hand, well... And there’s rate of fire. I can get off one or two spells a second for a bit. I’m pretty sure you can shoot faster and from farther away than I can cast and I’m told it won’t take you six years to train me up as a basic combat soldier.”

“Six months, more like,” the General said. “Longer if you’re looking for certain specializations such as urban combat specialists, demolitions types and certainly Special Forces. Even then, it won’t take six years.”

“So,” Harry said, “we can either field a combat force capable of dealing with Death Eaters and the like in a year or less with your help, or three to six years on our own. As we’re paying for it either way, I’d rather have soldiers sooner than later.”

“And an Air Force?” Air Vice Marshall Graham asked. “You think you have a use for these relics?”

“We already can train pilots to fly them. Eight of us are already in training from my family with eleven others. Another twenty-one start next week and we’re shooting for twenty every two weeks until we’re manned. We have or soon will have two squadrons of Tiger Moth trainers and have two more we can assemble. Our combat force will ultimately consist of three squadrons each of Lancasters, Bostons, Spitfires and Typhoons and maybe four of the Dakotas. But, we have no modern weapons and no one here as combat training. As for relics, the enemy has neither planes nor air defenses. If we can make these planes reach and hit the targets, there’s nothing the bad guys can do to stop up. That’s a huge force...”

“Multiplier,” Hermione finished.

Harry nodded. “I got the planes and can get pilots, why not use them?”

“So in the case of the Air Force, you’re asking for both teachers and technical assistance, but not aircraft?” the Air Vice Marshall observed.

“That is correct, Sir.”

“And you or your country is footing the bill?” the Prime Minister asked,

“That is our intention, Sir.”

“General? Air Vice Marshall?”

“My – er – staff and I would like a week or so to come up with requirements before I can make a recommendation to the Defense Minister, Sir,” General Churchill said.

"I can have an idea of what might be needed by then as well," Air Vice Marshall Graham agreed.

The Prime Minister nodded. "Get on it. No promises other than we'll see what we can do, Lord Harry."

"I would have been surprised if there had been at this point, Sir," Harry agreed.

"But Her Majesty has made this a priority," the Prime Minister added. "And as I won't have to go to Parliament for the money, or so it seems, we might be able to move somewhat quickly."

"We appreciate that, Sir."

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*P
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P

4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P - girl.
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
12. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
15. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
16. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise Nolan, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P

4. Victoria (Vicki) Peters, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa Jenkins, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
4. Christy Matthews, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).



Frank Longbottom, age 41.1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).

2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT: THE SKY IS FALLING!

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry woke up yet again with two lovely witches in his arms. This morning, following the Prime Minister's visit, it was Fiona and Laura. They were quite eager to make sure Harry was wide awake for breakfast.

"I have the feeling I'm in way over my head," Harry commented as they soaked in the huge bath tub, a wet and very naked witch under each arm.

"How so?" Fiona asked.

"All of this," Harry replied. "Prime Ministers, Queens, and all of it."

"You did just fine, Harry," Laura said.

"And you're not really in over your head, you know," Fiona added. "You have the lot of us."

"You really did well yesterday, Harry," Laura said. "But yeah, if it was just you, you'd be in over your head. But it's not, is it? You got a lot of smart people helping you and eager people as well like Fiona and me. You're doing just fine."

"You're not just saying that," Harry said.

"I'll admit, Harry," Fiona said, "I don't think many of us have any rich Heads of State we can compare you against in our backgrounds. But we know you did your best..."

"And while Fiona and I don't know you as well as some of the others, what we saw was impressive."

"We think you succeeded, Harry. Now close your eyes so we can rinse your hair."

“Yes Dear,” Harry said with a chuckle.

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1996 – Ministry of Magic, Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, London, U.K.

There was a reason why the concubine registration was passed to the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, although that reason was never published in the Daily Prophet. With the absence of Houses Potter, Longbottom and Bones and no proxies appointed to fill their seats or votes in the Wizengamot, the ability to pass new laws was abrogated. The three houses controlled enough votes to prevent a quorum. But the converse was also true. With no quorum, old laws could not be repealed.

Legislative Affairs was tasked with finding a way for the Ministry to legally locate and identify every Concubine in the British Isles. The problem was, of course, they had to do it within the existing code of laws. Not many people knew why, not even those tasked to do the research. The Minister’s Inner Circle knew that they would be hard pressed to come up with the four point two Million in reparations, but also knew they had little choice without leverage. They were notified that the demand had been filed with the I.C.W. just days after the British delegation was evicted in the wake of the sacking of Albus Dumbledore. The I.C.W. had made it clear they would not intervene in what was “purely an unwarranted personal dispute with interpretation of international law on the part of the Ministry” and would not intervene should an embargo be imposed. Thus, the Ministry either had to find a lot of money fast, or offer the return of the illegally obtained concubines. No one believed confiscating the women would eliminate any reparations payments, but it was hoped that the return, as an act of good faith, would convince Charenwell to request a more reasonable sum.

It turned out there was an obscure law on the books that could be used to find the missing girls. It was passed in 1702, not long after the Ministry was founded and granted the then Board of Regulation broad authority to license and monitor any magical creatures in the possession of any witch or wizard. Concubines were, after all, magical. Moreover, as insulting as it seemed, human beings were

creatures as well. And, as concubines were legally owned by their masters, they could be regulated just as the Ministry regulated the ownership and breeding of common Crups. Of course this interpretation of the old law was not something the Ministry wanted to advertise, but it did get around the lack of the ability to legislate. And, most importantly, the original statute imposed severe penalties for failure to register or providing false information in registering the “creatures” in question. Given that the original statute had been meant to deal with very dangerous creature such as dragons, it imposed “all penalties hereby authorized under our criminal law short of execution as the Courts or Commissions (as appropriate) deem justified under the circumstances.”

It was within this office within the Ministry that a young, red haired man and a short, plump red haired woman stood in a queue

“I don’t see how it’s any of their business, Mum,” Ron complained. “Why do they care about the slags?”

“Ronald, we are required to register,” Molly said. “That’s all you need to know. It’s not my fault or the Ministry’s that you have one of those ... You will comply with the rule because I am not about to pay your fine for not complying! If you don’t want to do this, sell her.”

“But I need her...!”

“Think with your brain, not your loins! Why?”

“She’s got N.E.W.T.s and such, Mum. I was gonna use Hermione to get me through classes. I can use her instead!”

“If you studied harder...”

“I can’t play Quidditch and study at the same time, don’t you understand?”

“Ronald, there’s more to life than a silly game!”

“Not to me there isn’t.”

“Fine then. But you are going to register your plaything!”

“Fine!” Ron moped.

“Next?” a voice called out. It was their turn at the counter. A young man sat before them with a stack of forms. “A bit young to be registering, aren’t you?” he said accusingly.

“Whatever,” Ron said.

“You do understand this line is for men with concubines, right?”

“I’m not stupid,” Ron replied.

“Fine,” he said. “Fill out this form completely.”

There were several pages of questions. Ron began to look it over:

REGISTRANT’S FULL NAME:

AGE:

DATE OF BIRTH:

ADDRESS:

OCCUPATION:

BLOOD STATUS:

PARENTS NAMES:...

There were then pages of detailed questions about the concubine. Ron could not understand why anyone cared about any of them. They apparently wanted to know everything there was to know about the concubine and the more he read, the more he realized he knew next to none of the answers.

“I don’t know this stuff,” he began.

“Fill it out completely or you will be fined!” the man said irritated. “That means, Sonny, go home and ask her for the information. You will note a detailed health questionnaire as well. That means you

need her to undergo a full physical and magical examination. You have two weeks to return the form to this office. Understand?”

“And if I don’t?”

“A thousand galleon fine.”

“I can’t pay that!”

“You’re still in school?”

Ron nodded.

“In lieu of a fine, you can forfeit your wand and accept expulsion.”

“WHAT?” Ron and Molly shrieked.

The man shrugged. “Just be thankful he’s in school. The other option is a stay in Azkaban. And don’t think you can ignore this. By showing up, you are now known to us and we will find you if you fail to comply. Got it?”

Ron nodded. “Fine!” he growled. He took the form and he and Molly left.

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1996 – Ministry of Magic, Department of International Cooperation, London, U.K.

Percy Weasley had been back in his old office for about a month now. With that fight at the Department of Mysteries and the revelation that Voldemort and his Death Eaters were back as that brat Potter had been saying for a year, anyone who had eagerly supported Fudge had suffered. True, Fudge was still Minister for Magic and Potter’s messing with the votes in the Wizengamot meant he would keep his seat for now, but it was not considered career enhancing to remain loyal to the lame duck in office. Percy had been one of the first of the rats to leave that sinking ship.

He was once again a junior official in what passed for Magical Britain's Foreign Office. However, his return had earned him a slight promotion. He was no longer a low level bureaucrat writing reports about trade and import/export duties. He was now a low level bureaucrat with the office that was tasked with dealing with the International Confederation of Wizards.

His "promotion" carried with it a pay raise, but little else. While Dumbledore had been Chief Mugwump, this was the office those who were out of favor with someone were condemned to. It existed only because the various treaties required it. Percy knew this was a backwater, a penalty for being on the wrong side of things and supporting a Minister who was now out of favor.

Then, within days of that Potter brat demanding reparations of all things, Dumbledore had been sacked as head of the I.C.W. Percy had been busier than he ever had been in his life. Literally within hours of Dumbledore's departure, demands had been coming in from the I.C.W. for various reports that were required under the treaties. Apparently, the idiots in this office had not sent any of the required reports. As near as Percy could tell, the last reports were sent before he was even born. Hell, it was before his older brothers had been born!

Naturally, creating the backlog of reports fell on Percy's shoulders.

The problem was, to make any effort at creating any of the old reports required cooperation from the various other Departments within the Ministry. The I.C.W. was demanding reports on every magical incident that had involved a Muggle since 1969! If the Ministry had any occasion to interact with a Muggle for any reason or had any information of magic being used near or upon any Muggle, it had to be reported. They also demanded information on any and all prosecutions, names of any witch or wizard implicated in any magical even involving Muggles and explanations regarding all failures to prosecute suspected violations of the treaties. It was almost immediately clear to Percy that his government was in serious trouble. As hard as he tried, there were few records about anything. The Obliviators' Office never recorded what they did. All he could get from them were expense reports for travel and meals. There was no

record as to whether any of those deployments involved Muggles. And they had better records than most departments!

Did anyone in this Bloody Government work?

“Weasley, get in here!” a voice boomed.

Percy knew the voice. It was his boss, Tiberius Hutchins, head of the I.C.W. Liaison Office and a person at least two steps removed from head of the Department. The fact that Percy was now further from those in power than at any other time in his career told him just how high a price he had paid in backing that fool Fudge. Percy thought about that as he walked into his boss’s office.

“You see this yet?” his boss said handing Percy a parchment.

Percy looked at it. It was from the I.C.W. and said the whole Ministry was subject to an audit pursuant to some section of some treaty. “No Sir. Can’t say that I’m surprised. We haven’t been in compliance for years, Sir.”

“I’m well aware of that, Weasley,” the man snapped. “Fudge told us not to bother as had Bagnold before him. They had no worries so long as that arrogant ass Dumbledore was head of the I.C.W. I argued we should still try and comply, as Dumbledore would not be around forever. Well, the bloody birds are most assuredly coming home to roost now! Those foreign bastards have it in for us.”

Percy nodded in agreement.

“Got a letter from my French counterpart,” the boss continued. “Says they’re tired of our country stepping on their toes and ignoring our obligations. It was a huge hint that this audit will not go well for us.”

“We don’t even have the records,” Percy agreed.

“And they’re sure as Merlin’s Beard going to shove that up our arse! Perfect timing too, you ask me. We got the damn Death Eaters



running about again, a major treaty violation particularly 'cause we didn't lock the lot of them away the last time as the treaty required. Fudge spent a year trying to cover up that mess, which will blow up in his face now. We'll be lucky to avoid a full I.C.W. embargo! Then there's this Charenwell mess."

"I'm sure it's just a bluff," Percy began. "Potter always was full of himself..."

"As well he should be, Weasley. It's no bluff. He's got us by the short and curlies, he has. If he pulls that embargo ... well, I hope you know how to pass as a Muggle."

"Surely we could import food from elsewhere."

"The I.C.W. would love to watch us starve, Weasley. If Charenwell cuts us off, you can bet Europe will at least consider doing the same. Then again, they might not. But you can bet your paycheck that none of us are making enough to pay for our food if Charenwell acts. You better hope the Ministry comes up with their demands, Weasley. There'll be hell to pay if we don't account for those whores."

At least I still have some money left from selling Penny, Percy thought.

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1996 – Ministry of Magic, Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office, London, U.K.

The last two weeks had been a hell on earth for Arthur Weasley in a way. His whole life had been dedicated to one thing: family. Everything else was subordinate to that. He never chose to rise much above his current position in the Ministry. The job paid enough. It was not a lot, but despite raising seven children, they were not in debt. To be ambitious would necessarily have meant placing his career first, which was never what he intended.

Things began unraveling about two years ago for certain, although now that Arthur finally had time to think about it, he was not certain if maybe it had begun much sooner and he had not even seen it. His

first indication that his world was not what he hoped it would be was the Tri-wizard Tournament.

Arguably, his family was not really involved directly. Harry Potter had been named as champion and forced to compete against his will. Arthur heard about it from his younger children in letters that followed hard on the heels of a lengthy article in the Daily Prophet. The writer should have been sued for slander for that one. Arthur knew enough about Harry to know the article was a pack of lies. The fact there was not a suit was just one of an increasing list of issues Arthur intended to raise with Harry's Magical Guardian as soon as he figured out who that man was.

It was, however, a slip by his son Percy that really got Arthur going. Percy was a "junior undersecretary" to Barty Crouch, the Head of the Department of International Cooperation. The job title was a recent invention. "Junior Undersecretaries" were little more than errand boys mostly. The title suggested protégé, but that did not change the fact that before Fudge had become Minister and started with these nonsense positions, the job was really that of an Office Boy. In Percy's case, it was the worst thing that could happen to the ambitious lad. He acted like someone far more powerful and influential than he was or could hope to be for some years, an attitude that would end the boy's career if he picked the wrong patron.

Percy, apparently, was present when Harry's name had come out of the Goblet of Fire, probably because Barty was too full of himself to carry his own briefcase. According to Percy, no one truly believed Harry could have cheated the Cup, although Percy was fool enough to believe Harry would have tried. Percy did not know the young man; that much was obvious. Despite the fact that no one believed that Harry could have gotten his name into the tournament, Crouch had insisted Harry was bound by magic to compete. Dumbledore had confirmed that fact that night and the boy very reluctantly agreed.

While Arthur might not have coveted higher office, one would be a fool to believe the man was either lazy or a fool. Arthur had a keen legal mind and knew far more about magical law than most people would have guessed. He knew that there were very few kinds of magic that could force a person to comply against their will, and fewer

still that did not carry a term of imprisonment in Azkaban for using such magic. The only three forms of compulsion magics that could bind a witch or wizard and were not illegal were the Life Debt, Debt of Honor, and the Concubine Bond. In two of those cases, the person arguably owed their binder something. In the case of the life debt it was arguably their very life. In the case of the Debt of Honor, they agreed voluntarily to what they were asked because their family had committed acts of a nature that would justify a blood feud against them. And as for the Concubine Bond, that technically was not involuntary at all. It was the right and duty of the Magical Guardian, who acted not unlike a parent as to a child. A child did not agree to go to school, that agreement was between the parent and the school and whether the child wanted to go was of no moment. The Concubine Bond was little different from a legal stand point, not that Arthur thought it was either moral or appropriate, but it found at least some support in the broader law of magical contract.

Arthur knew there was no way Harry could assent to compete in the Tournament. Only his parent or Magical Guardian could bind him to those terms as he was underage. Crouch was dead wrong in that regard. Countless would be contestants had been barred from competing by their families in the past and the ban was honored and the Cup merely put forth another name. The fact that Harry had to compete suggested his Magical Guardian had consented to his entry, yet everything Arthur heard told him that if this was the case, Harry was totally unaware of it.

Harry's competing in the tournament began to open rifts in Arthur's family he had not known were there. Percy openly denounced Harry, a position that Arthur thought was unjustified. Arthur's attempts to get his son to investigate the irregularities were rebuffed. His efforts to get others to do so met similar resistance, although it was clear the center of that resistance was coming from the Department of International Cooperation. What was most disturbing was that Dumbledore was ignoring his letters on the topic.

Ron had broken off his friendship with Harry, beginning a disturbing pattern of putting his self interests above everything including reality. Molly, on the other hand, seemed to become obsessive about the young man. While Arthur liked Harry as a person, he would never

consider Harry as a son. That would be wholly improper as the boy was, after all, Heir to a Noble and Ancient House. Arthur knew that trying to manipulate an heir without authority from the House by Will or otherwise was asking for trouble and reminded Molly of that fact on more than one occasion, only to be written off by her.

The fallout from the conclusion of that damnable tournament was more than any could have expected. First of all, Harry had won which spoke very highly of the lad. The fact that he was even in the running was more than could reasonably have been expected, and yet to Arthur's surprise the doubters and critics had mounted against the boy all year. Something else was in play, and Arthur knew that whatever it was, it would not go well for Harry in the end.

Secondly was his son Percy. In the fallout that followed it was revealed that Percy had spent most of the year covering up the fact that his department head was, for all practical purposes, incapacitated. His cover up continued when the man disappeared altogether. All year long, Percy had been acting as if he was under orders from Crouch when, in fact, Crouch had issued no such orders since not long after the Champions were announced. It was a power grab, plain and simple and in most cases should have ended Percy's career. But it had not. When it was clear that Minister Fudge sought to suppress all information that You-Know-Who had returned and launch a campaign to discredit Dumbledore and Harry, Percy was the man's most vocal supporter and quickly became part of that inner circle of incompetents. The boy even had the gall to order Arthur to tow the Minister's line. Arthur, as Head of House, refused and told Percy in no uncertain terms that any attempt to rope the family into the lad's schemes or discredit the family in any way would result in his immediate banishment. Even that arrogant lad knew that as a Pureblood from an ancient line, to be disowned for any reason would cost him his career at the Ministry. Molly had not taken that well at all, but it was not hers to say. The honor of House Weasley was the concern of House Weasley, not House Prewett! It was one of the few times in their marriage they had ever fought and the only time, until recently, that Molly was forced to back down, which might explain recent events.

Their next fight was at Christmas when Bill announced his engagement to Fleur Delacour. Arthur already knew it was beyond engagement. Bill had confided in him that Fleur was already his Consort, which effectively meant there was little or nothing anyone could do to separate them. Not that Arthur would. Fleur was from a very prominent French family and her father was considered next in line to head the government. To be honest, Arthur believed Bill could do no better. Unfortunately, Molly disagreed most vehemently. Arthur had no idea until then how myopic his wife's view of things really was and just how bigoted she could be. Fleur was a true Half Blood. Her father's line was magical and unbroken for over a thousand years or more, but never intentionally married into what Molly seemed to consider proper families. Fleur's grandmother was a Veela, which apparently Molly believed meant her son was lowering himself to "copulate with animals." Whether Bill knew his mother's opinion at that time was unclear, but he had left altogether only a couple of weeks ago and it was clear he wished no further contact from Molly ... ever.

Then there were the most recent revelations. Arthur was appalled at his wife's behavior. Ginny was the first girl born to his family in generations, and Molly was all but planning to act as the girl's pimp! Arthur had offered Ginny in payment of the Honor Debt Molly's patently illegal actions had incurred for two reasons. First of all, from what he had seen of the lad since he first met him, he could not disagree with his wife that Harry was a fine young man who might be a good match for his daughter, if things had gone that way. He thoroughly disagreed with using that as a justification for forcing the two together. Still, deep down he believed that Harry would never be cruel to his little girl, which was more than he could expect under the circumstances. Second, regardless of Ginny's fate at Harry's hands, Molly had shown her true colors. He would not allow his little girl to be a pawn in her vile schemes. By becoming Harry's concubine, Ginny was forever out of that vile woman's clutches. Arthur was infuriated to learn that the plot was supported by Albus Dumbledore and had removed the girl to keep that man out of his family as well.

Arthur was further infuriated with his son Ron. It appeared that the boy had less than honorable designs on Hermione Granger and justified his designs solely on the basis of her birth status. Hermione

might be a Muggle Born – a status Arthur had always believed was no important in and of itself as Hermione proved time and again – but she was clearly a far better person and far more capable witch than Ron could ever hope to be. That Molly had cultivated Ron's vile idea sealed the deal, as it were.

Next week, Molly would be notified of their divorce. The more he thought about it, the more Arthur wondered how he ever got involved with that woman. He wanted to believe she had changed. He wanted to believe the Molly of today was not the same woman as the one he had eloped with years ago. There was one minor problem: if they had loved each other as much as they believed they did back then, why was it the Consort Bond never took hold? This was not unusual, as many loving couples were unable to achieve that bond, but it was suspicious given recent events.

Ron's actions were unforgivable on so many levels. Most notably, his admissions all but destroyed what Arthur had spent his entire career trying to build. It had reinforced the Pureblood prejudices while at the same time – from what he had been hearing – alienated most of the magical population. The government could not change the laws he had seen enacted, but their bigotry only required a minor push to see the laws unenforced. A selfish, petty and lazy boy had destroyed any hope of bridging the gap between the Statuses in society, at least for now. As House Weasley had championed equal rights for centuries, Ron had given its opponents justification to quash that cause. Ron would learn his fate on his seventeenth Birthday this coming March when he would be disowned; there being little point announcing such before hand as the law did not recognize the disowning of a minor male in the line of succession. If Percy did not come around by then, there would be two letters delivered.

Arthur knew that Bill, Fred and George had left the country. He knew why, or at least thought he did. To be honest, he had no reason to remain as well. He had enough time in the Ministry to qualify for retirement; even though under other circumstances he was decades away from it. But he could not serve this government anymore. He sent his retirement papers off to the Personnel Department and then turned to his next project.

Dear Bill:

He wrote.

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1996 – Hogwarts School for Witchcraft and Wizardry, Headmaster's Office, Scotland, U.K.

Insult had piled upon injury upon insult almost daily in the two weeks and more since the reading of Sirius Black's will. It took him time to realize just how massively the dead Marauder had pranked him and the world and even longer to realize just how damned near impossible it had become to undo the damage. Dumbledore was forced to wonder how much of his current misery was directly the fault of one Sirius Black and how much was really the fault of House Potter. He was certain that both factors had led to his current state of political paralysis.

A month or so ago, despite all appearances to the contrary in the press and in the minds of many in magical Britain, Dumbledore was de facto ruler of magical Britain and had been for decades. Few truly knew the truth of the matter for it was a truth he had perfected in hiding through decades of careful manipulations and deceptions within deceptions. But the truth was for all practical purposes nothing happened in his world without at least his tacit approval.

It had taken decades to position himself for his ultimate rise to power. From the moment he finished Hogwarts, he had been moving towards the goal of attaining his Greater Good, a goal he knew most magicals were too dim witted to understand much less share. It had to be imposed upon them in such a way that they would never know what had happened, and such subtlety took time. Fortunately, unlike many of his rivals, Dumbledore had a nearly infinite reserve of patience as he did not see the absolute need for his goal to be achieved even within his lifetime so long as it was achieved in the end.

From the beginning, Dumbledore knew what he needed to control to guide his world onto his path. First and foremost was education. By guiding the education of future generations, by defining the limits of knowledge and study, man could be controlled. The ideal form of

control was to keep the masses of humanity both illiterate and ignorant and therefore dependent upon, if not worshipful of, the educated class. But while ideal, such nonsense was impractical. Education in the magical world was not something one could simply destroy and be done with for it was an ingrained part of the culture and had been for centuries. But this did not mean it could not be tailored to achieve a desired result.

Dumbledore had begun his life with an insatiable thirst for knowledge. At Hogwarts he quickly outpaced his classmates in every field of study save Divination. He might well have done the same there, but he never thought much of that art and felt it was far too ephemeral to be considered "knowledge." When he finished school at eighteen, he was already well beyond N.E.W.T. levels in Transfiguration and Potions and a frequent contributor to the scholarly journals in those fields; an honor no one had ever attained at such a young age before or since, just as no one had attained his marks before or since. Only two had come close. Tom Riddle might well have equaled him but for his fascination with Dark magic and controlling people. Most recently, there was Hermione Granger. She might well have threatened his records had she been slightly more ambitious and slightly less interested in one Harry Potter. It was for both of those reasons he sought to sell her off as a mind like that in support of House Potter would undermine everything.

Dumbledore also left Hogwarts as Head of an Ancient House and therefore as a junior member of the Wizengamot. He had little interest in politics per se. The constantly shifting alignments, continual subjugation of ideals by compromise and continual maneuvering for political advantage seemed insipid and a waste of intellectual ability. Politics was the game for those who could do no better, he had long thought. But, as his idea of a Greater Good coalesced, he knew some form of politics were unavoidable. Hence, as his long range plan formed, he spent more time in the Wizengamot observing. He was never a vocal member, seldom ever introduced a bill and rarely even participated in the debates. He watched. He learned. In time, he saw how it could be used to his advantage.

He reflected briefly on something Potter had once told him. It was following the boy's first encounter with Voldemort at school.



Voldemort tried to turn the lad with a promise of "Power." He told the lad there was no such thing as good or evil. Power was everything. And Riddle was an idiot. Power was the first step towards ruin. Few held it and avoided ruin and those few had avoided such fate through luck, not design. Power fuels animosity. Those who do not have it either want it or want to destroy it. No. CONTROL was the key. Power is visible. Control is not and therefore those who exercise control can do so without inspiring their demise whether figuratively or literally. Riddle never understood this. If you controlled men's knowledge, you controlled men's thoughts. If you controlled their thoughts, you controlled them. The imperious curse, murder, terror: these did no such things. Fear was temporary. If one lived with it long enough, it turned to rage and that leads to destruction. The fool Riddle would have ultimate power over nothing in the end for that would be all that was left.

Dumbledore had reached this conclusion very early on. To him, Voldemort was an annoyance, but that was because he had little use for the intellectually indolent and lazy. Voldemort saw his dark magics as the answer to all things. For Dumbledore, magic was but a tool. It was only as useful as the mind that wielded it, and Riddle had squandered that fortune just as his ancestors had squandered their financial fortunes.

The key to attaining the Greater Good (or even Voldemort's perverted society) was not through the power of one man, but through the power of countless thousands all striving for the same ends whether they knew it or not. Since most people were never so selfless as to strive without hope of some reward, be it monetary, emotional or spiritual or something else, getting all to move for a common purpose and keep moving without regard to their own self interests could not be done at wand point, so to speak. It could not be done in years. It would be the work of decades and possibly generations as it would, in the end, destroy the individual in favor of the collective "good", ambition in favor of service, and free will in favor of total subservience to the collective. Wizards had to be molded over a long period of time to become the leaders of mankind and take their rightful place in guiding mankind to a mutually beneficial future. Muggles needed to be controlled, for they were destructive by nature and when left to their own devices. Only wizards could control them, and it would take

most all if not all of the wizarding world working as one with one will and one goal to achieve the ends. This, in turn, meant the wizards would have to be controlled themselves for a time and molded into this new class. And historically, the magicals of the world were not known to work well and play well with others. Their whole way of thinking had to change.

The key, Dumbledore knew, was with the Purebloods and Ancient lines. They flocked to “tradition” like moths to a flame. They controlled their society. They also kept the Muggle Borns repressed. Muggle Borns were important to the “health” of the society. But their damnable ideas had to be repressed. Democracy was an idea that would destroy this world as surely as the most virulent plague and Muggle Borns had other notions equally toxic. They strove for knowledge best left hidden. There were “secrets” in magical history that were best forgotten for those secrets if revealed would end the Greater Good and threaten magical society as well. Muggle Borns were essential breeding stock, but of little other utility, in Dumbledore’s considered (and twisted) opinion.

Dumbledore knew the key to control was knowledge and at the age of twenty-three became one of the youngest members of the Hogwarts staff as Professor of Transfiguration. At that time, the Junior Professor also served as Chief Librarian, a post he never relinquished. He had an assistant who preserved the books, oversaw their use and storage; but he was the one tasked with determining the scope of the collections. And, as all magical schools in Britain followed Hogwarts lead, that meant if he decided a certain book was not appropriate or relevant for the education of students, then the book was to be removed from all school libraries.

It was not the knowledge of magic Dumbledore sought to control, or at least not entirely. Many books on spells and potions, whether benign or dark, remained on the shelves. But history was another matter. The histories made clear that wizards had never ruled over Muggles. The history he had learned made clear that wizards were not to rule over Muggles. Even though he saw his Greater Good as control rather than rule, to most it would mean the same thing. The old histories went so far as to suggest it was not proper for any magical to so much as desire such power, a point that he and his

former friend Grindelwald had discounted years earlier as little more than a sophistry designed to convince magicals that secrecy was their only chance for survival. Any histories or books on magic that suggested Muggle equality or superiority were soon off the shelves.

He also removed all books that discussed magical bonds. While no one had questioned the histories as even the then Professor of History Hieronymus Binns conceded were suspect and thankfully a proper History of Magic had been commissioned from a gifted researcher (and Pureblood Supremacist) named Bathilda Bagshot, the books on bonds were considered important. After all, girls needed to know they might be fated to become concubines and that notion had long died out in Muggle Britain. Fortunately, Phineas Black was Headmaster at the time and agreed the less the Muggle Borns knew, the better in that regard. The truth was, Dumbledore's primary reason for removing the books on bonding (and later human reproduction) was because he believed it would promote a much larger concubine class derived primarily from the heretical Muggle Borns and thus would keep their dangerous ideas in check.

The History of Magic that soon replaced all other histories in the schools was more a work of fiction than anything else when taken as a whole. It was more accurately a history of magic Purebloods could stomach. Dumbledore knew they wanted to see themselves as destined to dominate the top of society. The truth was they had never truly done so. The pillars of magical society had been the Ancient Houses, regardless of their blood purity. Blood purity was nothing more than an excuse to claim a right that had never before existed. And, in Dumbledore's mind, weakening the will of the Ancient Houses that had controlled the Wizengamot (at least those who might oppose the Greater Good) was all part of his plan. Sooner or later, those who knew the true history of their world would be dead. Historians were few and far between, so it was not like there would be any real voices of dissent, particularly if the Muggle Borns were kept in their box.

Dumbledore had firmly believed the Greater Good was generations away. Grindelwald believed it could be achieved in their lifetime by force. In 1945, Grindelwald learned that was not to be when Dumbledore defeated him in single combat. Grindelwald's war had been confined to the Continent. Magical Britain was strictly and

fiercely neutral. Any who openly supported the “Madman” faced Azkaban. Any who fought for him or tried to bring the war to Britain faced the Veil. Even Riddle, who probably privately supported Grindelwald’s ideas, was not foolish enough to do so publically. While Riddle was in school, he cited History of Magic as his source for Pureblood Supremacy, not Grindelwald’s rhetoric.

The defeat of Grindelwald arguably began to make the Greater Good more near term than Dumbledore had believed. He was elected Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot the next year, becoming the youngest ever to hold the post. Dumbledore knew what this meant. For all practical purposes he ruled Magical Britain.

The real control was not Hogwarts or the Ministry, as Riddle believed (because that’s what the fictitious history he had been taught said), but in the person of the Chief Warlock, if that person knew how to use his position wisely. His decades in that body had taught Dumbledore precisely how to do that. He stayed out of the political discourse. But soon, there was no law passed he did not let pass and no senior Ministry Official could be appointed above his objections. More importantly, the Minister of Magic was, whether they knew it or not, Dumbledore’s pawn. He removed them (or had them removed by not standing in the way of a no confidence vote) routinely. Few Ministers were ever popular enough that a year would go by without a call for their ouster by one member of the Wizengamot or another. It was the Chief Warlock who decided whether the motion would be set for debate or a vote. And if a Chief Warlock allowed the measure to move beyond a mere motion, it usually did not bode well for the Minister in question.

Dumbledore also knew the trap. If he was too active in such petty affairs, the membership would call for his ouster. Controlling the debate and who rose within the Ministry was something one did sparingly, which meant that when he did so, people took note and tended to follow his lead.

Voldemort, as pathetic as he and his mindless minions were, had also advanced the Greater Good. When Dumbledore rose to the position of Chief Warlock, and while he had been successful in suppressing certain historical knowledge within the younger

generations, the Wizengamot was still dominated by members who knew the real history. Dumbledore had been prepared to wait them out, even if that meant waiting for a time long after he was gone. His Order of the Phoenix was not created because of Voldemort as many believed. It was already over fifty years old when Voldemort began his "war." It was really a collection of Dumbledore's trusted followers who were trained and taught so that the Greater Good would one day become a reality. Voldemort's predations had two effects. First of all, the Order of the Phoenix became known to the wizarding public and associated with "The Light." More importantly, Voldemort culled the heard, as it were. Those Wizengamot members and Ministry officials who might have known the truth were among the most vocal opponents to the Purebloods and were among the first casualties other than Muggle Borns. The corporate knowledge the Order had been designed to outlive was all but wiped out decades or more sooner than expected.

This past couple of weeks had highlighted serious flaw in Dumbledore's plan. First of all, he had grossly underestimated one Harry Potter. He had hoped that by sticking the boy with his vile Muggle relations and denying him all knowledge of his family, including his sister, the boy would be the end of the line for House Potter, at least as skilled political opponents. He doubted that political acumen was an inherited skill, but apparently either the boy was a natural or he had far better political advisors than any wizard Dumbledore had dealt with not named Potter, Longbottom or Bones. It now seemed his efforts to marginalize his most vocal opponents and isolate them from each other and blown up more spectacularly than a potion in Severus's class.

Houses Potter, Longbottom, Bones and now Black were all in the hands of minors. Regardless of emancipation rights, no one under age seventeen could sit and vote in the Wizengamot. Until a few weeks ago, Dumbledore had held the proxy for House Potter's votes. That right was eviscerated when Sirius Black emancipated the boy. While he still could not take the seat himself, the boy now had the absolute right to appoint his House Proxy, revoking any prior appointments.

This would not have meant much alone. A minor Head of House was not unprecedented and it was not uncommon for them not to appoint a proxy. Even the sequestration of all Potter votes, the largest single block of votes in the Wizengamot, would not have ordinarily raised any eyebrows, much less precipitate a political crisis of any magnitude. The Black votes had never had a proxy. No one bothered to try and arrange one after Arcturus Black died in 1991. No one thought his grandson; the new Lord Black would ever escape from Azkaban. Most who knew of his status were certain he would die and dies soon. But Black had escaped and despite constant nagging from Dumbledore always seemed to forget about designating a proxy for the House Black votes. Again, this would not have caused a stir. Even knowing know that Potter would gain control over that House as well would have been of no moment. Then Voldemort had to go on the offensive.

The deaths of Amelia Bones and Augusta Longbottom, both of who had been holding their House Proxies, meant that the rightful heirs now held the right to assign a proxy or sequester the votes. Neville Longbottom and Susan Bones, who were thought to have been taken by Death Eaters the day of the murders were, it seemed, alive and well and withholding their proxies. Those four Houses being absent together ensured there could never be a quorum and it was obvious to Dumbledore and others that those damnable kids must be working in concert.

It had seemed easy enough at the time. All the Ministry had to do was declare the missing votes void or something like that and the quorum problem would go away allowing Dumbledore to legislate his way out of the mess Potter had caused following the reading of the Black Will. The problem was Dumbledore's zeal to rewrite wizarding history. Although he had done well in History of Magic over a hundred years ago in school, he was no student of it and never questioned the materials used. He now knew he should have.

Long before Dumbledore was born, wizarding History in Britain was being rewritten time and again to glorify one family or group over another. The most recent major rewrite was about 600 years ago when some Muggle King was forced off the throne by a relative and Wizarding Britain was freed from some Muggle Yoke, a change in

regime which was said to have freed the magicals from Muggle oppression and was said to have been engineered through the brilliance of noted Purebloods of the time. The History suggested that the new king was less interested in magic and that interest continued to wane. This was also around the time of the rise of the first Pureblood advocates.

Prior to this rise of Pureblood domination, the histories were all about the evils of the Muggle world: witch hunts, wars, slavery, oppression, plagues and deaths. The only high notes in this history were the founding of Hogwarts and the brief golden age of magic during the time of Merlin. Sometime between Merlin and Hogwarts, a Pureblood ruling body arose called the Wizengamot. Dumbledore now knew that even the history he had learned was woefully incomplete if not dead wrong. Controlling information without knowing what that information was in the first place was a huge embarrassment. And a couple of day earlier, Dumbledore learned just how much of an embarrassment it had become.

A group had gathered in a special antechamber adjacent to the Department of Mysteries. Ironical, Dumbledore thought to himself, as one could argue their current troubles began to manifest themselves just beyond these walls a little over a month ago. With him was the leadership of the Magical Government of Britain. He was joined by the five longest serving members of the Wizengamot, although between them they only held twenty-three votes outright. The Minister for Magic, as discredited as he was also was present along with his vile Senior Undersecretary who had only recently been released from hospital after a most unfortunate incident of Centaur Baiting. It had cost her more gold than she cared to have gotten off with only a stern warning. Rufus Scrimgeour, who many considered to be the next Minister, was also present along with Kingsley Shacklebolt who was acting head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. As this meeting indirectly involved alleged minors, Mafalda Hopkirk was also present. Finally, Seldon Davies, Director of Wizengamot Services was also present.

And elderly wizard entered the room. Given how long all had been working within the walls of the Ministry of Magic, they were all surprised they had never seen this man before.

“Good Afternoon,” the man said.

“And just who are you?” Dolores Umbridge demanded.

“My name is of such unimportance it need not be uttered.”

“I wish to know who is addressing us!”

“And why would that be? Planning on inviting your friends the Dementors ‘round to my place for tea? We are aware of your transgressions, Toad.”

“I am Dolores...”

She never finished her sentence. A toad had replaced her.

“For now you are as I say, Toad. I am Senior Researcher, Historical Section and that is all you need ever know. You hear my voice and see my face, but neither is mine. I am an Unspeakable, which by definition means I do not exist and yet I most certainly do. And before any of you get any bright ideas, the only magic that can exist in this room is my own. Yes, Dumbledore, that means your fabled wand is little more than one half of a set of chopsticks, a term you insular people cannot possibly fathom and I feel no need to explain.”

“I find your attitude insulting!” Minister Fudge said.

“And I find your continued existence a disease on the body of humanity,” the man replied. “As I do not exist, I have no need for your friends nor concern for your petty vanities. You have asked for my services and that is all you need to be concerned with. And I can make this quick. All you need to know is written upon these seven pieces of parchment,” the man said placing seven pieces of parchment before the group.

“I can’t read it,” a voice complained. “What in Merlin’s name kind of writing is that?”



Everyone looked to Dumbledore.

“It is runic,” he said. “But I am not familiar with this particular kind of runic language.”

“You can thank your ancestor for that, Dumbledore,” the man said. “It is among the thousands of mistakes your family has saddled this country with over the centuries.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“And you shan’t have it,” the man said. “The sequestration of a handful of votes...”

“A HANDFUL?” Fudge screamed. “Over one hundred and twenty! Over forty percent of all the votes! You know what that means?”

The man nodded. “The sequestration of a handful of votes is inconsiderable next to the sequestration of valuable knowledge. They say knowledge is power. Ignorance is therefore weakness. The Dumbledores have hidden away knowledge for centuries, too ignorant to learn it or use it and too fearful to allow their betters do so in their stead...”

“I have done no such thing!” Dumbledore protested.

“As compared to some of your more aggressive ancestors, Dumbledore, you are a rank amateur,” the man said, “BUT YOU ARE ALSO A LIAR! Or has your campaign of book sequestration been for your Greater Good? Your crisis is of Dumbledore’s making. Among his more heinous crimes is the removal of all book regarding magical bonds and contracts from the schools, a policy I dare say he has been most aggressive at since his first days as a teacher. Banning books and education are mutually exclusive concepts.”

“The removal of books on dark and undesirable magics is in the interest of our youth, or do you suggest we corrupt our youth?”

“Ah, but that is exactly what you have done! Your removal of those books alone is a major reason why you find yourself on my side of the door this day. Do you think you would have your current crisis regarding the wholesale enslavement of our young women had they been educated about such bondings? We are now at least three generations removed from the day those books went missing, Dumbledore. Three generations have been born only to be sold...”

“What does it matter? They’re Mudbloods! It is their lot in life!” a voice said.

“Enough of this!” Dumbledore said. “We are not here to talk about sound educational policy! We are here to learn if there is a way the Wizengamot can reconvene. Have you found a solution?”

“It is all there in those parchments,” the man said.

“Parchments no one can read!” Fudge protested.

“Pity,” the man replied. “And I was led to believe you were men of letters. The document is perfectly legible to one with a proper education.”

“Look, you patronizing bastard...” Scrimgeour started.

“But as you are clearly illiterate, I shall tell you what it says. It is written in the runic style of the Ancient Britons. It is a copy of the Original Wizengamot Charter entered into by our ancestors in the late seventh century.”

“Which defines our rights to rule,” Fudge said. “The document proclaiming us Purebloods and those of Ancient and Noble lines as preordained to lead...”

“Rubbish,” the man said. “It says no such thing. That is what Dumbledore’s ancestor wanted you to believe. But the truth meant little to him as it went against his view of himself. When this document was written, there were no Ancient and Noble Houses and no one

would take pride in being a Pureblood. Purebloods were farmers bound to the land forced to marry within their magical communities because they had no prospects...”

“What?”

“But that too is of no moment,” the man went on. “This is a magical Charter binding all who signed it to its terms and all of their descendants to this day. As these were the leaders within their world at the time, it bound all magicals within their lands as well. Its terms created your problem and provide but one solution – assuming you cannot convince the sequestered votes to return.”

“But there is a solution?” Fudge asked.

The man nodded. “It is incredibly simple when you think about it. It is also impossible.”

“WHAT?”

“Tell me,” the man said, “for as we all know, seating with full voting rights is hereditary. What happens when a line is disqualified?”

“Don’t you mean died out?” Fudge asked.

“No, disqualified,” the man replied. “Under the Charter a Patriarchal line passes from father to son. It cannot skip generations. If a Member dies without having a son, his line is disqualified. His rights can pass to a son of his Great-granduncle which is a new line, or he can pass it by will to another seated line. But it cannot pass through daughters to grandsons or great-grandsons. The Matriarchal lines work the same way, except the line passes from mother to daughter.”

“Matriarchal lines?” Kingsley asked.

“Surely you don’t think a borderline squib such as Fudge’s pet toad is seated for any other reason? She is from a Matriarchal line, having inherited her seat following the murder of her mother by the Death

Eaters. Fortunately, she's failed to curse us with any spawn so we can say goodbye to her line in time.

"Now, it is also true and has happened that a line dies out completely. Historically, it is then up to the Chief Warlock to pass that line's votes to a remaining seated line of the same class. However, it should be noted that when the Charter was signed in the late Seventh Century there were three hundred members with three hundred votes. In 1400, there were still three hundred members with three hundred votes. It is only since 1400 when the Wizengamot, under the deluded leadership of House Dumbledore, stopped bringing in new lines to fill the vacancies and the seats dwindle with remaining lines acquiring more and more votes leading to today with four lines controlling more than enough votes to prevent a quorum and seal the Wizengamot Chambers."

"And how do we fix this?" Dumbledore asked.

"Easy," the man said. "You return to the old ways. You fill all three hundred seats with each member from a different family and each member having but one vote. Four Houses would be rather irrelevant then."

"But that would destroy the balance," Dumbledore said.

"But you would be back in business. Under the circumstances, I seriously doubt you have any other option."

"Always could kill them" a man suggested.

"Under the Charter, killing for control of House Votes is punishable by death of the line involved in the killing and sequestration of the votes in question until the grandchild of the longest living line from that date passes on. You'd be out of business for at least two centuries."

"So we just need new members then?" Dumbledore asked. "Seems easy enough."

“And yet it is also impossible,” the man replied.

“How so?” Fudge asked. “Surely we can find a couple of hundred or more pureblood lines and reliable and respectable half-bloods to fill the vacancies?”

“They must meet the diversity required between Matriarchal and Patriarchal line,” the man said. “One in three lines must be headed by a witch to be passed to her daughter.” After the grumbling died down, he continued. “Moreover, they must be new lines.”

“Well obviously if they have no seat now, they’re new right?”

“You said Purebloods or Half-bloods,” the man replied.

“So?”

“So, the Charter is clear. A “New Line” means a line new to magic. No new line can be seated unless it is headed by what we now call a Muggle Born.”

“IMPOSSIBLE!” several voices complained.

“As I said earlier. It’s simple, but impossible.”

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn’t read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who’s with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George’s School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew’s, SP – St. Patrick’s, SD – St. David’s.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\*

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT (POTTER).\*P
2. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT (BLACK).\*
3. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*P
4. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr); CONCUBINE (POTTER).P - girl.
5. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu); CONCUBINE (BLACK).P - boy.
6. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
7. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
8. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (POTTER).\*
9. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).\*
10. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
11. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
12. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
13. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
14. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).
15. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6); CONCUBINE (POTTER).
16. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT (BILL WEASLEY).P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5); CONCUBINE BILL WEASLEY).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).
11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT (NEVILLE).\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
7. Amanda Kennedy, age 16 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).
10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (Hu-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (FRED).\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6); CONCUBINE (FRED).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRED).
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRED).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRED).
10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).
11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (FRED).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT (GEORGE).\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).\*
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).



10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (Ra-4); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2); CONCUBINE (GEORGE).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
4. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG); CONCUBINE (REMUS).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5); CONCUBINE (REMUS).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT (FRANK).

2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD); CONCUBINE (FRANK).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5); CONCUBINE (FRANK).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FORTY-NINE: DOUBLE VISION

FRIDAY, JULY 26th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Like the other five young women who had been magically ripped away from their families that morning, Parvati Patil ate her lunch in silence. The revelations, for lack of a better word, of the last few hours would take far more time to digest than the meal before them. She had woken up that morning in the room she had shared with her twin sister Padma all of her life or at least all of her life at home. If what she had been told meant what she thought it did, she might well never see that room, her home, again. In a way it could have been much worse. At least Pad was here and based upon what they had been told the two would not be separated.

Until she started Hogwarts, Pad had been her best friend. They were still close, but not as they had once been. That day in the Great Hall when they were sorted was arguably the worst day in both of their lives. Parvati had been sorted into Gryffindor. Her sister had been sorted into Ravenclaw. That school was such that they seldom had time to intermingle. They had a handful of classes together, but their schedules by no means matched. It seemed that unless they were in the same class, whenever Parvati had a free period it seemed Pad did not. It did not help that there seemed to be some unwritten rule about not associating with the students from other houses. Were it not for the friends she had made in Gryffindor, Parvati would have been miserable.

There were three other girls in the Gryffindor First Year girls' dorm with her when she began. Two were Muggle Borns: Hermione Granger and Sally-Anne Perks. Sally-Anne was nice enough, but was very quiet and a bit shy about everything. The girl was particularly taken aback at what went on in the older girls' dorms and bathrooms and once asked Parvati if that was normal. Parvati took her to talk with one of the girl prefects about it and even though they were told it was quite normal and not what Sally-Anne suspected, the poor girl was still uncomfortable that the results of such things would soon actually become necessary.

Hermione was a bit annoying at first, Parvati thought. It took years for her to begin to understand the girl. She kept her personal life real quiet. But Parvati had come to realize that the girl had been an outcast when she was younger and had built defenses to keep from getting hurt which unfortunately made it harder for her to adapt and have friends. She tried so hard, at first, and it drove her roommates up the wall. This was in large part because she tried to get them organized and focused on school. It drove their other roommate Lavender Brown up the wall.

But the truth was Hermione really did care about the people around her, at least those who were not mean to her. Lavender could be quite nasty to people when pushed and it seemed for a time that Parvati's job was to ensure harmony within their dorm. She felt sorry for Hermione for a time. The girl desperately wanted to make friends but also, despite being one of the smartest people Parvati had ever met, Hermione had no idea how to interact with others on a personal level. Parvati was afraid Hermione might give up altogether. When that boy made a rude comment about Hermione at Halloween, Parvati and Lavender spent hours trying to convince the poor girl to leave the bathroom and not to worry about it, but she was convinced everyone hated her and always would.

Something happened that night she never really understood and the House thing didn't help. That Halloween night, after all she and Lavender did to try and get their roommate and (hopefully) friend out of that bathroom stall, something happened they could not predict. Hermione returned to the dorm late after the troll incident. She returned a changed person in some ways. True, she still pressed them to study and such, but she was much nicer about it. The day after it was clear to many she was now close friends with Harry Potter.

Observing and commenting upon relationships became a bit of a hobby for Parvati and her best friend Lavender. Parvati knew that people thought of the two of them as gossips, but that was not truly accurate. A gossip spreads rumors, any kind of rumor without regard to any facts. She and Lavender merely discussed known facts and speculated as to what those known facts meant. Okay, she was the one who did that. Lavender enjoyed the rumors as well. And of

course, anyone who was plugged into the Hogwarts rumor mill knew that most centered around one Harry Potter and those who were considered to be his friends.

Parvati quickly realized that the real Harry Potter was not like what anyone had thought. On the one hand he was quiet and generally unassuming, quite the opposite of the glory seeker that many Slytherins believed him to be. On the other, most of his life was a mystery, a fact that only increased one's curiosity, and what few hints about his life outside Hogwarts there were tended to be contradictory. For example, it was said he was rich. Yet, aside from his school uniforms, his clothes were far too large and clearly far too well worn. His uniforms were hardly flashy either, unlike some of the Slytherins who obviously spent far too much on theirs. Yet, while his clothes screamed poor, he always seemed to have more pocket money than most, a point first observed Fourth Year when he was seen in Hogsmeade. Then there were his brooms. First Year he made the Quidditch team after an aerial fight with Draco Malfoy (about whom there was a persistent rumor that the ponce preferred blokes, a rumor most girls hoped was true). Before the first match, Potter received a Nimbus 2000 model broom which was said to be very expensive. When that broom was destroyed in a match against Hufflepuff Third Year, he got a Firebolt which was said to be so expensive you had to ask for a price. (And if you had to ask, you probably could not afford it.) Some said this was proof the boy was rich. Parvati believed it was merely proof that he had rich relatives or some such.

After that Halloween where Harry saved Hermione from the troll, a story Parvati did not learn until much later, just this past year in fact, it was clear that Harry and Hermione had become best friends. It had been clear that Harry was friends with Ron Weasley, although only Hermione probably knew why. Sally-Anne was convinced there was some kind of evil magic involved there, as Ron was an utter prat to everyone including Harry. Ron was the only Gryffindor in their year to totally abandon Harry when he somehow was selected to compete in the Tri-wizard Tournament. True, only Hermione and Neville Longbottom believed his without question when he said he had not entered the tournament. The rest of the girls in that dorm did not know what to believe, but feared for him and hoped he would do well at the same time. The other Gryffindor boys supported Harry. Ron

was pissed for weeks thinking that if Harry could get in, he should have been able to as well. As if!

Parvati was Indian. She and her sister Padma were born outside Mumbai and her parents had moved to England when they were babies. Both her parents were magical, although in India there was no notion of blood purity. Magic was a gift from the gods, not a birthright. Early in her life, her mother told her the fables of their home and explained that in fables there was always some truth. The truth might not be in the tale itself, but was always in the message the tale presented and she and Padma were always asked to figure out the message.

One of those tales was the tale of an orphan boy who eventually grew into a powerful wizard. There were, in fact, several stories about him. His name was Marahtma, which was said to be unique. The first tale was how he came to learn he was magical. A young witch "discovered" him. He was not doing anything magical at the time. He had nicked some food from a stall and was running away and ran into the young witch (his future wife, but that was another tale). She immediately sensed his magic and took him to her home. What was unusual about this tale was the boy was from the lowest Caste in society and the girl from a much higher one. The lesson, Parvati remembered, was twofold. First, a witch can sense a wizard's magic and might well be drawn to it if it was powerful enough. The second was that magic known no caste.

Harry was one powerful young wizard. Parvati had sensed as much as early as first year and rumors as to how powerful he might be began circulating not long after that Halloween night. It was rumored he fought a troll! The boy was barely five foot tall and probably knew less magic than anyone, at least anyone raised in a magical home, and yet he defeated a troll! He was also rumored to have dueled with the Evil Wizard himself later that year and won! At the end of Second Year, he was rumored to have killed a massive basilisk. This was the same year it had been revealed he could talk to snakes. Most everyone seemed to think this made him evil himself, something neither his actions nor that magic supported. Parvati tried to convince Sally-Anne and Lavender there was no connection between that talent and evil. While snake speak might be rare in Britain, it was not

so unique in India and was always associated with good. Snake speakers were often hired to lure the cobras away from villages and fields.

Any doubts anyone had about Harry should have been settled by the end of the First Task of the Tournament where he made short work, in a manner of speaking, of what had to be the nastiest dragon anyone had ever seen and won the task easily. Of the three tasks, it was the only one that everyone could see. Malfoy and his goons claimed it was all luck. That's not what Parvati saw. He summoned his broom from the school! That was powerful magic! (Particularly because he had been struggling with that spell in class not a week earlier!)

He had asked her to the Yule Ball that followed. She was not foolish enough to see that as more than it was. He needed a date. That was all. She knew where his heart was and it was not with her. It was a pity because he was probably near the top of any list of potential boyfriend material in her mind and that list had nothing to do with money or fame or any of that. He was there because he was one of the nicest boys she knew. But it was obvious to her, even if it was not obvious to them, that Harry was all but already taken. He was a perfect gentleman to her during the dinner, even if a bit distracted. She knew why as his "real" girlfriend was with someone else. He was also a fair dancer, having only stepped on her toes once and apologizing profusely for it. Still, she wished he could have "pretended" longer than he did. She was not too surprised he was not into dancing (especially as the one girl he should have been with was with someone else), but at least she was having a better time than Padma.

Ron Weasley was a berk. There was no other way to describe Harry's other so called friend. The boy had to be set up for a date! He should have been grateful for it, as Padma was a Patil and that meant she was one of the best looking girls in her year. But apparently Ron was just as narrow minded as most British magicals and saw the dark skin and did not think "girl." He ignored his date all evening, sulking about Granger. That proved he was stupid as well. The only way Granger would ever date the berk would be if she was stupid about such things. She was clearly in love with Harry and had been for ages.

It was obvious! Whenever she got into a fight with Weasley she was either angry or frustrated with the idiot. A fight with Harry, which were far fewer in number, always broke her heart. To this day, Parvati had no idea what either of them saw in that berk.

She sighed to herself as she thought of her past. None of that really mattered anymore. Somehow, she had been sold off as a concubine and her life would never be the same.

Padma was not thinking about boyfriends and relationships as she ate her lunch. How could this have happened to her and her sister? Their father was a wizard and they knew what concubines were in this country. Even if McGonagall was right and this was more like what happened in India, there was no way their father could have known that.

In India, it was not uncommon to sell a daughter into this bond. It was done all the time, particularly if the daughter was pretty and the family was unable to arrange an acceptable match for her and where she was of a lower caste than the wizard in question. While magic knew no caste, the people did. The system of rigid class boundaries had been a fixture in the society for thousands of years and was only now breaking down in the Muggle World. The one constant seemed to be the Magical World was not as quick to change. Padma figured it had to do with the fact that magicals lived much longer than Muggles.

The term "upward mobility" was a foreign concept in the magical world for some reason. In Britain, being a Muggle Born placed you at the bottom rung of society. Wealth and position were not denied to you, but you had to build it yourself. Existing businesses and especially government jobs would keep you at a low level regardless of your talents or abilities. There were exceptions. Healers and Aurors placed talent above all else and those professions had a surprising number of Muggle Borns. But elsewhere, Muggle Borns were not given opportunities. One would expect that "Muggle Studies" would be taught by a Muggle Born. The main reason why Padma had not taken that course was because it was taught by a Pureblood witch who had probable never even met a Muggle.

In Britain a witch was bound by her blood status. As a Muggle Born, she'd be lucky to be more than a shop girl, assuming she avoided becoming a concubine. Her children, if magical, might be considered Half Bloods and have more opportunities. In a few generations, should their descendants marry well, they might become "Purebloods" and have no barriers other than the limits of their talents. Disgusting system, Padma thought. Some of the most talented in her year were Muggle Borns and she was technically a Half-Blood, and both were limiting in their options in life. She was second in her class! She should have no limitations. She was certain Hermione Granger was first in their class and the girl would be lucky to get a job at all!

India cared not about magical blood status. But it was not perfect either. Caste still mattered and a Muggle Born was bound by their Caste. Then again, Granger came from what would be an upper caste in India. She was not from the top caste, but high enough that she would not be so limited. Padma was from a higher caste as well, but here she was a half-blood foreigner which meant she was not much higher in this society than a Muggle Born.

In India, a girl with talent might be sold as a concubine. The reason was the talent would make her desirable to a higher caste wizard. This was the traditional means of upward mobility. The girl would be sold into a harem of a higher caste and her children would be of that caste. The money would help her family and in particular the brothers of the girl. Only the most lowly and poor sold their girls into the sex trade and even then only when there was no better option. In Britain, it seemed, that was the fate of most concubines regardless of their status. Britain was arguably more sexist than India, at least on the magical side.

She knew her parents knew this. She also knew she had been sold at auction. McGonagall had said as much. What was her Daddy thinking? Even if McGonagall was right about their fate, there was no way their Daddy could have known they were not destined for the sex trade. She was second in her year, yet he thought so little of her as to sell her off as a plaything? And Parvati was no slouch either. Were it not for Divination, Parvati might well have been much higher than twelfth in the class. Parvati had all Outstandings on her O.W.L.s aside from and Exceeds in History and an Acceptable in Divination



which was a bloody miracle. She aced the theory section of that exam, but she was no seer and failed the practical. Padma had tried to convince her not to take that silly course, but her friend Lavender thought it would be "interesting." Now they were reaping their reward for being foreign witches.

There were four other witches with them; each had a different robe from the others. All were Hogwarts students and all were Muggle Borns. Padma was the only Ravenclaw. There was a former Fourth Year Hufflepuff named Agnes Martin with a "B" on her robe. The other three were Gryffindors.

Padma knew Leanne Tinker who had an "N" on her robe. Leanne was a former Sixth Year and one of Parvati's regular girl sex partners. Arguably, she had been one of Padma's as well as she and her sister would take advantage of being identical from time to time. Padma had "played" Parvati in the bathrooms for Leanne, Lavender Brown and Callie Frick, a Half-Blood how had just finished school. Parvati had played Padma for Cho Chang, Mandy Brocklehurst and Lisa Turpin, Padma's regular Ravenclaw partners. That was the thing about girl sex. The majority were "straight". You had regular partners, but no exclusive ones. The handful of girls who were exclusive were probably not batting from the right side of the wicket. Girl sex talk was almost always about boys. To be honest, when she was with a girl for her orgasm, Padma was thinking about boys.

She remembered the "talk" her mother gave them the summer before their Third Year. It was embarrassing as anyone could imagine. It was bad enough that it was about boys and sex that was almost frightening. But their mother had also told them about the importance of the female orgasm for the adolescent witch. Neither she nor Parvati truly knew what that meant; although it explained all that they had seen in the girls' dorms and bathrooms. They their mother showed them how to get one on their own? That was almost mortifying. She also told them about girl sex. It was nothing more than a similar tactic and, while arguably a boy might do as well, the witch needed daily release which was something that could not be guaranteed by a boyfriend. Oh sure, they would love to be the one to do that, but most didn't know what they were doing and many could actually care less about the witch's needs. Besides, romance was

seldom a constant at their age. Masturbation or Girl Sex was necessary as it was not dependent upon the availability or skill of a boy. More importantly, their mother had said, one never got pregnant from masturbation or girl sex. As girl sex between sisters of adolescent age was not frowned upon by witches, their mother had all but encouraged them to become partners if doing it themselves was uncomfortable, which was what drove many young witches into girl sex. Parvati was Padma's first partner and her only one on most holidays. Still, each yearned for a boy.

In that regard Parvati had been the more successful. Her first date was with Harry Potter, arguably the best of the lot. But it had not been a great date for her. Still, Parvati still liked Harry as a friend. Padma could say no such thing about her first date. She had been set up with Ron Weasley for the Yule Ball. That was a disaster! The handful of other dates she had since then were marginally better, but it was clear that her dates wanted more than to get to know her as a person and that was very annoying to say the least. Parvati might be into experimenting that way from time to time (assuming she was telling the truth), but Padma was not about to go beyond a kiss unless more meant something. Not that it mattered anymore, she thought. Ideas of romance and love vanished the moment McGonagall said she and her sister and the others were destined to be concubines.

Padma did not know the other two Gryffindors. They were both Third Years. Jessica Bates had an "F" on her robes and Betsy Watson had a "G." Padma and Parvati each had an "H." None of them were told exactly what the letters meant. They knew it had something to do with their new "families" and it clearly meant there were five separate ones. But whether the letters meant the name of their wizard or something else was anyone's guess at this point. At least if what they knew about the letters was correct, Padma would remain with her sister.

The lunch soon ended and one by one the other girls met their escorts and were led away. Soon it was only Parvati and Padma who remained alone on the veranda.

"Parv?" Padma asked. "What are you thinking?"

"I'm scared Pad," Parvati replied.

Padma nodded. "Me too."

"I don't want this."

"Neither do I, Parv. What was Daddy thinking?"

"Obviously he wasn't," Parvati said with a growl in her voice. "What's this letter mean?"

Padma shrugged. "Aside from a way for them to tell who or where we are supposed to go? No idea."

"You think it could be a name?"

Padma shrugged. "That would make some kind of sense. But if it is, why were we all gathered here? Why weren't we just summoned to wherever it was we're supposed to go?"

Parvati nodded. "Still, this suggests there's more than one wizard involved. The others were led away at almost the same time and..."

"Why weren't we?" Padma asked. "Why are we still waiting?"

"They forgot about us?" Parvati offered. "It's either that or we have to wait until the others are bound."

"That makes sense," Padma said. "Disgusting as it is."

"Sorry I'm late," a voice said.

The two turned and saw a well endowed witch standing before them.

"Got hung up by things," the witch said. "I'm Dora and I'm your escort."

"To where?" Parvati asked.

"To wherever," Dora replied with a smile. "Now come on you two. Time's a wasting."

Padma and Parvati were left alone in what they believed had to be the largest library either of them had ever seen. Both of them were studious at school and spent a lot of time in the Hogwarts library and each stood and stared at the rows of books trying to guess how large this library was.

"It's supposed to be larger than any magical library in Britain," a female voice said from behind.

The two girls turned around and saw the person who had spoken. She was about their height with long, curly brown hair that spilled over her shoulders. She was wearing a silk robe tied with a delicate sash. The robe was a short one, ending about the middle of her milky white and well toned thighs. Beside her stood another girl. She was shorter with long blonde hair and a similar robe.

"Hermione?" Parvati asked.

"Luna?" Padma asked at about the same time.

"Hello Parvati," Hermione said with a smile. Luna said hello to Padma as well. "So, do you like our library?"

"Ummm..."

"Much larger than Hogwarts," Luna said. "And there's no silly restricted section or Madam Pince. Good thing too."

"Definitely," Hermione agreed. "It would be kind of hard to get good and shagged with her complaining about the noise."

"And this room is one of our favorite places for sex," Luna added. "Not saying much there, however, considering we'll all take it wherever we can get it."

"So the men here...?" Padma began.

"Oh, there's only one for us, Pad," Luna said. "There's one of him and including you two eighteen of us. Mind you I do love what he can do to me, but he's not always around..."

"Or available," Hermione added. "We try and make sure he gets to all of us almost every day, but a girl still needs her release so if he's not available we just get together with any horny girl."

"Provided they are his as well," Luna added. "We don't shag girls who're not bonded to him."

"But you two weren't," Parvati began.

"Not until after he had us," Luna said. "Now we are. It's so much more fun than doing it by yourself, you know."

"Did the bond..." Padma began.

"No," Hermione replied. "Our bond with him does not compel us to do anything. He can take us whenever he wants not because of the bond but because we want him to."

"He's really good," Luna growled. "But he's also really randy, not that we mind, but he can wear you out quite easily."

"We make it a point to warn all the new girls about that," Hermione added. "It never works."

"Oh?" Parvati asked. "Does he order you to...?"

"Oh no," Luna said. "Once you're bonded with him, you'll want it. He'll never order you again. Still, you two should be warned not to overdo it today, although there really is little point as you probably will."

"I think we are capable of self restraint," Parvati said.

"They all think that," Luna noted to Hermione. "I know I did."

"I wasn't thinking about that at all our first time," Hermione said. "Next thing I knew we'd done it like ten times that day. I was walking funny

most the next day. Fortunately for him I found out I love sucking his cock."

"That and he bonded with Dora that day as well," Luna added.

"True," Hermione said, "but I had recovered by then so I got good and shagged as well."

"In front of the other?" Padma asked in shock.

"Of course," Hermione said. "She watched us bond, so why not? I'm his, Luna's his, and the others are his. We define privacy a little different here. If you're with family, it's private even if everyone is there."

"Kind of hard to have a really good orgy if people are worried about who's watching," Luna said. "Mind you, we do restrain ourselves when there're guests in the house. But that's not too often. When we know it's just family, this is what we wear," she added indicating her robes.

"It's all we wear," Hermione added.

"It's much easier to play with boobies when there're no shirts and bras in the way."

"Luna likes boobs," Hermione said.

"And it makes it easier to play with a girl's pussy with no knickers to mess with," Luna added.

"And who is this perv?" Parvati asked.

"I'll give you some hints," Hermione said. "Minerva told you about the various bonds, didn't she?"

The twins nodded.

"Well, because he's head of two Ancient and Noble Houses, he can have two consorts. I'm one of them. We bonded the day after the summer began. We were both virgins then and yes it was wonderful."

"I'm his other Consort," Luna said. "I bonded with him about two weeks later and Hermione was with us when we did it. Once I was his for life, well that's when Hermione and I decided it was a good time to experience girl sex, and yes we let him watch."

"It's Harry, isn't it?" Parvati said.

"Harry Potter?" Padma asked.

Hermione and Luna nodded.

"How did this happen?" Parvati asked. "Not that I'm complaining. I mean under the circumstances ... well."

"Like the others who arrived here today, the rights to you were sold at auction to the highest bidder," Hermione said. "Harry was the highest bidder for all the young ... I believe the term is fresh witches this year."

"Our Dad would never sell us!" Padma protested. "Not like that! Not blindly!"

"Like the others, Dumbledore sold you," Hermione said. It was his sale number for almost all of the witches Harry had bought at the auction."

"How could he? Our Dad's a wizard!" Parvati protested.

"We don't know for certain," Hermione said. "We do know he passed a law a few years back giving him the right to sell foreign witches living in Britain. That might be what happened. We just don't know."

"How many?" Padma asked after a long pause.

"Forty for certain," Hermione said.

"And they are all part of Harry's..." Parvati began.

"No," Hermione replied. "Harry did buy them, but most are to be bound to another family. When all is said and done, Harry will have twenty-four of us bound to him. But, excluding Consorts, a total of a ninety-five have come into his control. The rest are being bound to one of six other families in the area."

"Any others we know?" Padma asked.

"Probably," Hermione said. "There are thirteen Gryffindors, sixteen Hufflepuffs, fifteen Ravenclaws and five Slytherins who are either bound or will be and that does not include consorts or older witches. Our year at Hogwarts has been gutted. There are only six witches who are not part of this."

"Who?" Padma and Parvati asked in unison.

"Lisa Turpin from Ravenclaw is not one of the girls," Hermione said. "Lilith Moon and Eloise Midgen from Hufflepuff are not on the list. Neither are Millicent Bulstrode, Pansy Parkinson or Augusta Runcorn from Slytherin."

"Lavender is?" Parvati asked.

Hermione nodded. "She's not here yet, but she will be soon. She, however, won't be with Harry."

"If they're not all going to be with Harry, then who are they with?" Parvati asked.

"Most of the other girls in our year are being bound to Neville Longbottom," Hermione said. "Susan Bones is his Consort. Mandy Brocklehurst is bound to Bill Weasley. His Consort is Fleur Delacour..."

"The Tri-wizard Champion from France?"



Hermione nodded. "Bill is the oldest of the Weasley boys. Fred and George are also getting a lot of girls. Alicia Spinnet is Fred's Consort and Angelina Johnson is George's."

"How many?" Padma asked.

"When all is said and done, each of the Weasley houses will have fifteen concubines. Neville will have eighteen. Harry will have twenty-two, half will be Potters like me and the other half Blacks like Luna."

"And us?"

"You'll be a Potter," Luna said to Padma.

"And you'll be a Black," Hermione said to Parvati.

"You're separating us?" Parvati asked.

"Not at all," Hermione said. "We are all one family but with two names. You and Padma will share a flat for now. Whether you share one later is up to you. All this decides is what last name your children will have, nothing else."

"Why those houses?" Padma asked. "I mean you and Parvati were roommates at school and Luna and I were in the same House."

"Harry's idea," Hermione said. "He will have at least two young women from each of the schools in Britain and at least two from each House at Hogwarts."

"There're other schools?" Parvati asked.

"Five to be exact," Hermione replied. "Anyway, he wants at least one from each 'source' in each House. Right now House Potter has four Gryffindors and no Ravenclaws. As you're the last Gryffindor that will be joining us, Parvati, you're the Black Gryffindor. Padma will be the Potter Ravenclaw. Again, the only significance if there is any is your new last name. Well, that and should you have a son, they or their descendants would be in the line of succession for that house and not

the other. It's not that big a deal in a way. Both houses are quite wealthy."

"House Potter is wealthier," Luna noted. "But the Blacks are either the second or third wealthiest magical House in Britain, so money is not a real issue. That is one thing we and our children may never need worry about."

A fragment of a thought had popped into Padma's head. It had been there before as she and Parvati listened to Professor McGonagall's lesson on bonds and what had happened to them and had flitted in and out of her consciousness both during lunch and their talk with Hermione and Luna and now, as they began to meet the other members of their new "family" it was really beginning to bother her. She knew it was something important. She knew it was something she had either read or heard at some point, but probably not recently. She could not understand why it might be important or even relevant to what was happening; only that somehow it was. It was annoying to know that she should know something but being unable to recall it. The nagging thought that she knew or had known something only got louder in her head as each of the witches was introduced.

She had already known Professor McGonagall had been a concubine for some time as the Professor had told them all that earlier. It was hard to see the stern head of Gryffindor House as a concubine, much less one who had been bound since she was younger than Padma and Parvati were. Were she into the usual betting pools that surfaced almost daily at school and were there a pool on whom McGonagall was bound to, Parvati would have bet on the oldest of the possible candidates. She and Parvati were both stunned to learn that McGonagall – Minerva or Minnie now – was bound to Harry. The woman looked much younger than she had as their Transfiguration Professor, then again witches did not age quickly as a rule and McGonagall was barely middle aged. Glamour charms could easily alter her apparent age. Still, Minerva was fifty-two when her "husband" had been born! Moreover, they learned that she had been bound to the head of House Potter most of her life and even came within months of maybe becoming Harry's grandmother. Had Harry's real grandmother not become pregnant with Harry's father when she

did, McGonagall would have been given permission to carry on the Potter line! And now she was pregnant by Harry!

Along with McGonagall, House Potter had three other "experienced" concubines, although that experience predated Harry's bond. Stacey Campbell was seventeen and had been a sex slave under the worst conditions for three years before Harry had "rescued" her. Apparently the Malfoys were far more evil than they had supposed. Rhonda Lester was also seventeen and had been a Death Eater toy for two years before Harry. Laura Oliver was twenty-one and had been another Death Eater's slave for five years. All three were Muggle Borns and none had been at Hogwarts. All were sentenced to their hells by Albus Dumbledore. This would become an almost constant theme. Most all of the girls had been sold into whatever fate awaited them by Dumbledore! In fact, had they not avoided Dumbledore's annual habit, the Consorts they had been told about were supposed to suffer a similar fate!

The three witches had attended four of the five other schools. Stacey had attended St. George's; the oldest school in England supposedly founded two hundred years after Hogwarts before being transferred to St. Andrew's in Scotland by Lucius Malfoy. St. Andrew's was even older, having opened not more than a couple of generations after Hogwarts apparently. Laura had attended Prince Edward's School in Northern England which was said to have been named after Edward the Black Prince, son and heir of English King Edward III who died in France before he could attain the throne and who it was said might have had some sort of magical connection, although no one could say for certain what that was given how suspect if not false current histories were about magic in Britain. Rhonda had attended St. David's which was the Welsh national school. All three, it seemed, had been sold into bondage by Dumbledore either because they were Muggle Born or because of the foreign student law Dumbledore passed in late 1988, the act that technically might have given him power over the Patils without regard to their blood status.

The remaining Potter witches were Hogwarts students. Katie Bell and Ginny Weasley were both Gryffindors and both owed their bondage to Dumbledore. Katie was sold at auction. Ginny was bound as a result of a vile plot aimed at Harry. Neither Padma or Parvati had

reason to believe the man could be so vile. He would sell Hermione to Malfoy or Ron Weasley, two boys who were arguably the worst choices, just to keep her from influencing Harry so that Ginny could be mated with Harry to control the Potter Line? And both Ginny and Harry were to die? It was no better than the Death Eaters! Astoria Greengrass was a Slytherin and with her sister Daphne, who was now House Black, had been forced into bondage by the Death Eaters. At least that story was mildly amusing. Any story where Draco Malfoy was yet again showed to be the idiot was amusing. In another time and under other circumstances, Draco's job prospects would probably be limited to being the Court Fool. It was a pity the ponce never figured that out.

House Black was so similar to House Potter it was scary. The elder concubine, Mallory, had been a St. George's student until Dumbledore sold her it seems. She spent several months as little more than a whore before being sold to Sirius Black (who was apparently innocent and left to rot in prison without a trial by the same man because of his connection to Harry.) Dora was a victim of Death Eater coercion during the last war and was sold off to House Black before she was even born! The other four: Fiona, Karen, Tabatha and Connie were all sold off by Dumbledore with the older two winding up in the "tender mercies" (read living hell) of the Death Eaters.

It was clear by the end of the introduction that despite outward appearances Dumbledore was no friend of Harry's. Arguably Voldemort was better! At least all he wanted to do was kill Harry outright! It seemed Dumbledore wanted the boy to suffer. They learned of his illegal placement following the death of his parents and Dumbledore's excessive efforts to make Harry stay with relatives who could best be described as marginally better than Death Eaters. Minerva had been spying on Dumbledore for years for Harry's family and had known where Harry was, but forgot before she could tell Harry's real family. She was not obliviated, which meant they suspected some kind of ward. The ones that erased such memories were generally illegal and often dark magic. So much for the supposed leader of the Light. Add to the story the fact that Connie had been Harry's friend, for which she and her family were obliviated and one had to wonder how the vile man was not on the Most Wanted list or named among the Dark Wizards of history.

"Similarity," "Common," "Communal:" these were words that Padma thought of when hearing the various short descriptions from the other sixteen witches. Their paths to this room were similar in many ways. They had common enemies with the Death Eaters, Dumbledore and Pureblood bigots in general. They even seemed to share some of these problems with Harry, and her, and Parvati. For some reason these words seemed important, like clues to a puzzle or parts of an equation and yet the answer failed to appear to her.

What surprised her and Parvati almost as much was the fact that all fourteen concubines had already taken the Love Bond with Harry. What they knew of the bond was limited to what McGonagall had told them earlier ... and something else, but that something else was slipping her mind for now. It was easier to attain than the Consort Bond in theory. They did not have to love Harry with all of their heart nor he them for it to take hold, but they had to have positive feelings about Harry. She could understand – maybe – the girls who had spent time with the Death Eaters. They could possibly feel as if they had been rescued or some such. The others made less sense.

Tabatha bonded with him within a day of being brought here with no warning. She had no idea about Harry at all before then. The Greengrass sisters were Slytherins! True, so far as Padma knew they and Harry had not been directly antagonistic, but as a general rule Harry disliked Slytherins on principal and they him and everyone knew that! Connie? She knew Harry for three years and that was eight years ago and until now she had no clear memory of him. For all she (or Tabatha) knew, they had been kidnapped. Harry had taken their virginity – there was no other word for it – and yet she too was Love Bonded. Tabatha had "held out" for a day. Connie was Love Bonded within an hour! And from what Ginny described, her bonding was even scarier, and she too had Love Bonded as soon as she could.

Add to this strange equation that Hermione and three others were already pregnant, seven others would be in short order and all of the others probably would be within a year, two at the most? That's not the way this was supposed to work, was it? They should be more ... resentful? And yet why wasn't she feeling resentful? Padma should

be dreading this knowing full well what was coming, and yet she felt as if she was looking forward to it? Something was off! She hoped it was in a good way, but it was off. Something else to add to this problem with the elusive answer, but one which she knew was important and had not been mentioned.

Her train of thought was interrupted when Harry entered. He was last and aside from her and Parvati, he was the only one who was "dressed" as all the others were in what Ginny had described as their "fuck me" robes. She expected him to get to the matter at hand as it were. Then again, the more she thought about it, the more she wondered why they had not bonded first and explained later rather than giving her and Parvati hours to think about what was going to happen. Padma watched as Harry "worked" the room, kissing each of the sixteen others passionately as he undid their robes and exposed them. None of them seemed to mind in the least. Quite the opposite in fact. Finally, with the others disrobed and seated in the semi-circle of chairs facing the bonding bench, Harry turned to Padma and Parvati.

He surprised both of them by apologizing for the Yule Ball. He told Parvati that regardless of whatever was going on in his life at the time, and there was a lot, having asked her to be his date he should have done a better job of making the evening special for her. The fact that he was not really interested in going or dating at the time was no excuse for ignoring her and ruining what could have been a fond memory for her. He apologized to Padma for setting her up with a date that was even worse. Harry had stopped trying after the second dance. Ron Weasley never even bothered to try. She deserved better than a horrible date with a boy with the sensitivity of a Blast Ended Screwt and the table manners of a troll. Padma was surprised both at the apology and the description which actually made both her and her sister laugh. He then apologized again for what had now happened to them and promised them far more than either had reason to expect. He then surprised them again by kissing them both, quite well Padma thought and judging by Parvati's soft moan of pleasure it was not just her opinion. Definitely a seven or better on the toe curling scale, which surprised her even more. She shouldn't have enjoyed it, but she did and he had not even stated the bonding oath! What was happening and was this part of the other things she had noticed?

"It's amazing that I can tell you two beautiful ladies apart," Harry said with a smile. Something had definitely changed about the boy since Padma had last seen him. Gone was the sullen boy with anger in his eyes. Before her stood a handsome young man not much different in appearance than she remembered but noticeably more confident and judging by his very genuine smile happy. She wondered if the company of the others was a reason for it, or whether it was just Hermione.

"So similar yet so different," he said softly drawing them into a gentle hug. "Expressions separate us, you know. Your smile, looks, glares Parvati are just different enough from Padma's to give you away. You're the talker and you're the thinker," he said to Parvati and Padma in return. "But let's test this theory, shall we?" He pulled away and smiled at them briefly with that crooked and all but irresistible smile that he only showed to Hermione before. He then recited the bonding oath, taking her as a Potter in mind, body, heart, soul and magic until death and Parvati as a Black. "Now," he said. "Your clothes also set you two apart. Let's see if telling you apart is harder without them, shall we?"

Padma could not help but nod in reply. Oddly, she wanted him to see her naked like the others provided, of course, that he'd soon return the favor. It did not take her or her sister long to remove all their clothes and watch Harry as he admired the both of them for a moment.

"Pity," he chuckled. "Still too easy! You trim, don't you Parvati?"

Parvati nodded, blushing. "Hermione? Care to even the playing field?"

Hermione got up from her chair, naked and with her wand as Harry instructed the both of them to hold their arms up. Padma had no idea what spell she cast, because it was muttered very softly. Hermione then smiled at them and returned to her seat.

"You two are quite beautiful," Harry said softly. "And it is harder to tell you apart now ... without looking the two of you in the eyes." He had

a hand on her shoulder now, stroking it gently and Padma guessed he was doing the same to Parvati as he kissed them in turn before touching her breast gently. She was amazed at how good it felt. He seemed to know just how, where and when to touch her to get the biggest reaction from her and could tell from Parvati's sigh she was probably thinking something similar. "Who wants to go first?" Harry asked.

"Me!" they both said in unison.

"Fine," Harry chuckled. "Well, I try not and play favorites. I'll sit on the bench, close my eyes and you two decide. The one going second sits beside me and the one going first will straddle my lap, okay?"

Padma and Parvati both nodded. This is crazy, Padma thought. Why am I so eager? Harry did as he said and a quick game of rock, paper, scissors soon found Padma straddling his lap with Parvati snuggled against him watching to see what would happen. He truly did know exactly how, when and where to touch her and kiss her as well, was all Padma could think for several minutes until all thought left her amid wave after wave of pleasure and arguably the most powerful orgasm she had ever experienced. She was soon snuggled into Harry's side as Harry performed the same magic on her sister.

Padma tried to think about the puzzle that had begun forming in her mind as her sister snuggled into Harry catching her breath. She might have tried sooner, but watching Harry do what he did to her to Parvati was too ... distracting was not the word ... too much of a turn on? She had to admit that was definitely the case. But if she didn't figure this thing out ... Then Harry had to observe that he was definitely overdressed for the occasion considering everyone else was quite naked. He stood and Parvati and she rose with him, removing his shirt as they did before kneeling beside each other to remove his slacks. When Harry was down to his boxers, one might say reality set in. That is one humungous bulge! Padma thought. Before she knew it, both she and her sister were rubbing it with their hands. There was a joke or something about the relationship between a wizard's magical power and the size and power of his "magical wand." Parvati's gasp as they lowered his boxers and saw it for the first time told Padma that Harry had a very impressive wand hiding in his shorts.



Fortunately, Padma thought, Parvati was soon testing it quite eagerly with her mouth. Padma was a little intimidated by its size, but apparently Parvati was not. Far from it, Padma thought as she watched her sister push it in and out of her mouth. Surely if she can handle it, I can, she thought. She was surprised she was looking forward to it as her sister polished the wand just inches away. She was also surprised and a little disappointed to see that the wonderful wand faded to nothing by the time Parvati finished. But Harry turned his hips slightly and it was there for her for the taking and she took the small and very soft cock into her mouth for the first time. Then, to her surprise and joy, it began to respond to her and grow again! By the time the wand had returned, Padma was used to it and eager to repay Harry for the mind blowing orgasm he had given her. She did know how long it took, but it did not seem too long before she knew she had succeeded beyond her wildest expectations.

She sat back panting, glistening with sweat with Parvati beside her beginning to moan as Padma watched Harry do to her sister what he did to her as her reward for her first blow job. If she had thought Harry's fingers and hands were magic, if she had thought he knew exactly when, where and how to touch her, it was nothing compared to what he did to her with his tongue and mouth. That was, without a doubt, the best oral sex she had ever received and she was a girl sex girl who had believed what the older girls said that boys are not nearly as good at that as girls! Obviously, the term "boy" did not apply to Harry, Padma thought as she could feel her sister climax next to her.

Harry made love to her not long after. It was amazing! Sure, it hurt a bit, but then... Now she knew why the others were so ... eager! She thought about how he made her feel as he made her a woman as she watched him do the same for Parvati and knew right then. As soon as she could, she was going to Love Bond with him and naturally let him have his way with her, preferably over and over again. Okay fine, she thought, she'd let Parvati have her turns with him as well.

Parvati was still recovering from her multiple orgasms (that amazing gift Harry had given Padma for her first time as well) when the "Cross Bonding" began. Harry explained this to them before calling Connie

over. Connie, being a Black, would be used to bond Padma to that house as well. When Connie was done getting good and shagged, Padma (now bonded to both Houses) would shag him silly to Cross Bond her sister (Parvati would get her turn as Cross Bonder on Monday.) Apparently, the trick Harry had silent showed her earlier (sucking him when he was soft) was very effective at getting him ready again, for that's what Connie did at least until he was back when she stopped and then rode him for all she was worth. Padma did exactly what Connie had only minutes after she and Harry were finished.

As Padma recovered her senses following yet another round of mind blowing Harry sex while watching Harry "make sure" her sister "didn't feel left out" she noticed the collars and absently touched hers for the first time. She was now bound to Harry for life and it did not seem to matter anymore. She knew that all it would take for her to be his "wife" was the Love Bond and knew that would be no problem. As she looked around the room thinking, one part of her mind wondered whether she should do it when Harry finished her sister this time or whether she should wait a bit until he took her again. They had been told that he had four other witches he needed to shag before bedtime, but they would have him to themselves until morning! And, just because he had to do those other witches did not mean they couldn't have some Harry time between now and then!

She noticed that several of the other "girls" were now busily having their own fun with each other. Minerva seemed to be the only one not busy so Padma got up and walked over to her. This was her new life after all and they had been told aside from Harry, there are no favorites and no House lines. Minerva smiled at her as she knelt between her former professor's legs and leaned in. She soon forgot all about the puzzle in her mind and surrendered herself totally to this new family.

Parvati was not thinking about puzzles. She was thinking about amazing orgasms and had been practically from the moment Harry first kissed her. She had been with boys before, but never all the way. They did not matter anymore. She never wanted another boyfriend again. No boy was better than Harry! She did not care if she walked funny for days. She was going to get as much of him today as

possible! And, she was going to have some of that girl sex as well and be Love Bonded and get permissions and hopefully get knocked up! She wanted the whole thing! She wanted to be fully a part of whatever this was because it was so wonderful!

Dinner was a short rest for her and her sister and the others. They did not even bother dressing in their robes. Apparently, Bonding Days were like this, but she was told that it was not all sex. Pity. But it was still amazing. When dinner was over, Harry was busy with a couple of other girls, Laura or Karen. So Parvati decided it was a good time to see what her former roommate was like. Hopefully, she and Pad would get to try some of those three-way Harry rides later.

Two very exhausted witches snuggled into either side of their wizard for their first night's sleep in his wonderful arms. He could definitely tell them apart now with or without clothes and they both enjoyed their Bonding and told him over and over again, usually when he was inside them, although it was kind of hard sometimes as they were between another witch's legs; including each others. Harry had made a quip that he loved sisters. Something about sibling rivalry making for really hot sex, as he had apparently learned with the Greengrass sisters. Twins just added another level to it.

As Padma and Parvati began to drift off, each had a very contented smile on their face. Each was now Love Bonded to their wizard and each now had permission to bear his child. Connie had asked for permission as well after they had. It was their bonding day, but she had already decided that she wanted the final step as well. Padma wondered what it would be like in the spring as Harry would have fourteen witches giving birth over a period of a month or two. Harry did not seem to mind.

Fourteen! Seven! Similarity! Commonality! Communal! One family! Padma remembered the word that had eluded her just as she fell asleep.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

Slight change due to a reviewer comment that I thought was a good idea.

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (10/17/79) (Ra-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER) 7/26/96.

HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5).\*
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (10/17/79) (Gr-5); CONCUBINE (BLACK) 7/26/79.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle Martin, age 15 (6/16/81) (Hu-4); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/26/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (Hu-5).
11. Leanne Lucille Tinker, age 17 (1/16/79) (Gr-6); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/26/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).

10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) Bates, age 14 (6/7/82) (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/26/96.

.George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy Watson, age 14 (2/21/82) (Gr-3); CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/26/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).
2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).
4. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY: THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE

SUNDAY, JULY 28th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

They had now been here two days. Parvati reflected on this as she waited for Padma to finish setting up her new room. The Bonding had been a wonderful surprise for her. Her mother had told her stories from India about that sort of thing and in most cases it seemed that while the girl in the story eventually had a good life in her new family, the bonding was not pleasant. As it happened, she had wondered why they had been gathered and told at length about what was about to happen to them and wondered yet again about the talk she and Padma had with Hermione and Luna all before Harry had even arrived. She now thought she understood. The long talk made it far easier to accept this change in her life which in turn made the whole thing magical. It was not how she imagined her first time would be. But now, looking back, she had to admit it probably was better than she ever could imagine. Harry made it so wonderful and somehow had made it seem like it was meant to be this way; like this was the life she was born to become a part of.

To her surprise, Padma felt the same way. While she and her sister might be almost identical in appearance, and only those who truly knew them could tell them apart on appearance alone, that's where their similarities ended. Being sorted into a different house from her sister those years ago had been hard at first. But over time, Parvati understood why it occurred. Of the two of them, she was the more adventurous and outgoing. Padma was the more intellectual and reserved. They were both very smart, not Hermione smart but bright enough and they loved to read. But whereas Padma loved reading about history and magic, Parvati was more into fiction and had developed a taste for romance literature. She wondered if that would continue now that her life made most of the books she had read appear tame in comparison.

Waking up in his arms the morning after was like a dream for her and her sister. He was amazing in bed in quite an unexpected way as it had been a very good night's sleep filled with very pleasant dreams for both of them. When they told him this he chuckled. He said he dreaded ever sleeping alone again. Ever since that first night with

Hermione, he slept exceptionally well and had not suffered the nightmares that had plagued him since well before Hogwarts and which had only gotten worse as school wore on. Even though both she and Padma knew they had clearly overdone it, despite the polite warning, they both allowed Harry to thank them for the wonderful night again that morning ... twice each.

Saturday and been spent shopping. Daphne and Astoria took them and the other two "new" witches into Pottersport and they bought more clothes than ever. Parvati was in a sort of heaven as she enjoyed that sort of thing as did Connie apparently. Padma liked the clothes, but merely tolerated the shopping. It had never been her thing. That trip began their "new" education. They now knew that they were no longer in Britain. It was obvious even if they had not been told. Diagon Alley had become almost too depressing to visit. Yet here, the shops were busy and streets bustling. It was amazing to be in a truly magical country. It was even more amazing to learn that humble, gentle Harry Potter was the Duke. Yet another thing their "husband" had not known until just a few weeks ago and another reason to add to the list of reasons never to return to Britain.

When they arrived back at the Manor, they were shown to their new rooms. In the common room a stack of boxes awaited them. Apparently the Manor Staff had somehow boxed up all of their possessions from home and brought them here. Parvati and her sister were also informed that their parents would be invited to move here soon. Well, not to the Manor itself, but to a town their Harry was building nearby.

That evening, they attended what apparently was a weekly meeting of sorts. It was basically information overload for both of them. Harry was obviously doing far more than bonding witches to him. There were talks about a pending war, the ongoing troubles in Britain and working with the British Muggles that clearly showed the both of them they had missed a lot and would have to spend time catching up. It was here too that they met the other girls bound to the other families and, while it was one thing to be told about what happened, it was quite another to see it for themselves.



It was here too they learned more about the Auction. Apparently Harry's agent (Dora) had been drawn into a bidding war for the two of them. They had cost their Harry almost fifteen thousand Galleons! Moreover, they learned, Harry had made it clear to Dora that all of the girls were to be purchased regardless of their price or bid. He was not going to allow others to suffer the fate that had befallen countless unfortunate women in the past.

There was a long report on information obtained about Death Eaters. Several women had been enslaved to them and their supporters and now freed of their bonds told all they knew. The information had little immediate value, but Parvati was stunned to learn that Harry and his people now knew far more about the Death Eaters than did the Ministry of Magic! Obviously they were gathering this information for a reason. They also learned that Dumbledore owed Harry a terrible amount of money and many seemed disappointed that the man seemed like he might be able to pay. Given that it was Dumbledore who had seen to it she and her sister wound up with Harry, Parvati was almost ready to send him a thank you note. Given what would have happened had Harry not done what he did, she'd rather send him a Howler.

That night she and Padma finally had a chance to talk to each other as sisters. It was then that Padma told her what she really thought had happened and the notion intrigued Parvati as much as it did her sister. It fit almost perfectly with what their mother had told them and the stories about India. Padma noted, however, that she had looked that up at Hogwarts and found very little of use. There was a reference that it was "foreign" magic and another that it was "dark," but Padma added that Snake Talkers were considered evil in Britain. She was now of the opinion that "dark magic" in Britain, while it included truly dark arts like necromancy and hate based magics, also included any magic that was deemed to weaken "Purebloods" and the control wizards held over witches. It was worth looking through Harry's library to see if there was anything about Padma's idea.

They had not had time to do so on Sunday. The morning was spent out of the Manor at a restaurant Harry took his family to for brunch every Sunday. When they got back, she and Padma had been pulled aside by Astoria and Luna to help make Harry's Birthday Present. It

was an interesting and surprisingly fun couple of hours contributing their part to a gift they both thought Harry would like. (Given Harry's wealth, what could they possibly buy him?)

Following dinner and a little Harry time for themselves and a few others, they were gathered together with all of the witches and got their "presents." Along with the seven others who had joined the family in the last two weeks, Parvati and her sister now wore beautiful "engagement rings" in honor of their bonding and "wedding bands" in honor of their Love Bonds. They also had jewelry that would have been the envy of all the girls at Hogwarts, had they returned.

They were alone again in their new quarters. Harry had taken Rhonda and Karen to his bed that night and Parvati and Padma learned that she and Padma would be with him Wednesday night. For now, however, it was just the two of them and they both agreed that as bizarre a twist as their lives had taken over the past few days, they were glad about what had happened to them and, once their parents were here as well, they would not want their old lives back for anything.

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry had spent his Sunday night with Rhonda and Karen. Once again, his first Monday found him at a large gathering early in the morning as all awaited Mallory's news regarding this week's tests. As they waited and the women with permissions entered the Family Dining Room one by one, Minerva announced she had decided upon a name for her and Harry's daughter. The girl, due in early April, would be named Anna Rose. A simple name, Minerva said, for what she hoped would be a life far less complicated than the one her parents were living.

Mallory soon entered and smiled at the gathering. Harry was there with his seventeen other women, all now Potters or Blacks. Neville was there with his twelve women, nine of whom were now Longbottoms but Neville, Susan and Hannah counted Pattie as a tenth. Bill was there with his twelve, nine of whom were also Weasleys now. Fred was there with his eight Weasley girls and his four younger ones who had yet to take the next bond. George's family

remained "identical" to Fred's and was there as well. Remus was there with his six women, his Stephanie having become his Consort over the weekend. Only his youngest, Ellie, was not yet a Lupin. Finally, Frank and Alice were there with their five ladies, four of whom were now Longbottoms.

"Right then," Mallory said. "We have a lot of lucky winners this week. This time, I'll begin with those we already know about. George and Angelina: congratulations, you two are expecting a son."

"Yes!" George said pumping his fist.

"We're calling him Fredrick Arthur," Angelina said, "after his favorite uncle and his granddad."

"There goes the neighborhood," Harry quipped.

"Fred and Verity are also having a son," Mallory said.

"Okay, there goes the whole ruddy country," Harry chuckled as Fred and George shook hands. Fred announced his first son would be named John William, because Verity liked the name and he was saving George for Alicia.

"Bill and Fleur," Mallory said, "you're having a daughter."

"So much for the Weasley curse," Fred said as he congratulated his eldest brother. The girl was going to be named after Fleur's sister.

"What are you feeding your girls Neville?" Mallory asked in a mock scolding tone.

"I'm sorry?" Neville asked.

"Like Amber, Susan is expecting twins," Mallory said. "A boy and a girl as well."

Susan threw her arms around Neville.

"Wow," Neville said. "This is so wonderful. I - when I was little there weren't any kids around my own age. Already, our little Frank and Hannah will have Amber and my Harry and Suzanne and loads of others their age to play with. This is wonderful."

Harry thought about that as well. His kids would not be alone either. His Sirius (by Mallory) and Anna (by Minerva) would have loads of brothers and sisters their own age and loads of friends as well.

"Finally Dora," Mallory said. "You and Harry are having a daughter."

Dora leapt into Harry's lap and gave him a kiss. "We're naming her kind of after my Mum," Dora said when she finally broke for air. "Mind you, I'm not naming my kid Andromeda, but Andrea works and she can be called Andy, just like my Mum."

"Right," Mallory said after the congratulations died down. "Now for the newest members of this rapidly growing baby shower club. First up, Remus Lupin and his Amelia."

Remus gave the woman a long kiss. "I never thought..." he began. Stephanie was there to help him calm down. It was clear that becoming a father was not something he had expected in his life given his condition.

"Frank Longbottom," Mallory called out. "I'm sorry Alice."

"Don't be," Alice said. "Given where I am in my cycle, I would have been surprised if it was me. So who's the lucky girl?"

"Veronica."

The woman in question gave out a surprised squeal of delight.

"It's gonna be weird," Neville said. "My kids will have aunts or uncles their age."

"And Frank and I will have grandkids the same age as our children," Alice said. "Don't worry too much about it Neville. As you said, your kids will have all kinds of children to play with in time."

Neville nodded with a smile.

"George, you poor man," Mallory teased.

"What? Didn't get any this week?" George asked.

"Oh no," Mallory said. "You certainly did. Ellen is expecting..."

A squeal of delight was heard from the last of the shop girls.

"...as is Georgina."

"Told you Sis," Georgina said with a smile as she waited her turn for a congratulatory snog from their wizard. Shelly smiled at her twin sister.

"Daddy'll have kittens when he finds out," she said.

"Fred?" Mallory asked, "you'd better give Alicia a good kiss."

"I'm pregnant?" Alicia asked. When Mallory nodded, the former Chaser all but tackled the former Beater.

"You know," Harry said, "we might want to consider wearing pads in the future if our ladies continue to be so - er - enthusiastic."

Hermione slapped Harry on the arm.

"Next up," Mallory continued, "is Bill Weasley and his Lana."

"Yes!" the former Lana Powell exclaimed before giving Bill a kiss. "Take that you Pureblood bastards!" she added.

"I'm a Pureblood," Bill protested.

"Sorry luv, Death Eater bastards!" Lana corrected herself. "Said I wasn't worthy and all that..."

"It's okay, Lana," Bill said as she started to cry.

"Erm ..." Mallory began, "Neville Longbottom and Penelope..."

"Thank you Neville," Penelope said softly.

"You're welcome," Neville replied. "Merlin's Beard, what have I gotten myself into?" he added chuckling.

"And last but not least," Mallory continued, "Harry and Daphne."

Daphne walked over to her wizard doing her best to show the others a modicum of proper decorum. Her modicum failed as soon as she was close to Harry. She launched herself into his arms, tears streaming down her face as her sister told everyone she was going to be an Aunt now.

"Is it always like this?" Padma asked turning to Luna who was seated next to her.

"Oh no," Luna said. "We only find out about babies on Mondays. We should probably change the name of the day to Babyday so there's no confusion."

"But is every Monday like this?"

"Pretty much," Luna said. "I mean the tackling and snogging bits. Today was different 'cause there were more of us finding out what we were going to have or that we were going to have a little one. I do hope I'm next. Mum and Daddy would be so proud..."

"Sorry Luna," Padma said.

"Oh, it's okay," Luna said. "I lost Daddy but gained a wonderful family in return."

"No, I mean about everything else," Padma said. "I should have stopped the others from..."

"I don't blame you for other people's issues, Padma," Luna said. "You were never mean to me at all and that was special then. Now you're

here with Harry and all of us, and that is special too. The past is over and done. We can't change it. But we have a future we can make here that can be better than our pasts. I hope you understand that."

Padma nodded. "Nothing about Wrackspurts and Crumple Horned Snorkacks?"

"Oh, I found my Crumple Horned Shorkacks," Luna said with a smile. "Turns out they live here. Well, not here, here. They live in the nature preserve in the mountains. Lovely things they are. I was feeling really down and Harry took me there. It was a wonderful day. As for the Wrackspurts, I think they are a unique British beastie. Haven't seen them since I came here."

"Okay, listen up," Harry called out. "First of all, congratulations to everyone. Right then. Our fledgling Air Force can start another class for flight training this week. Assuming you are agreeable, the following people can begin their training this morning. For reference, those of us who began a couple weeks ago have been designated Class 9601. We continue training as well.

"For the rest of you, we will be starting new classes of twenty or so every two weeks for now. To participate this year, you must have been born on or before December 31st, 1981. Those of you who are younger can start next year, we hope. Those of you who are not spending your mornings in flight training are encouraged to join us here for magical instruction.

"Class 9602 is as follows assuming the people and families involved are agreeable:

"From my family we have: Laura, Fiona and Tabatha. From Neville's we have: Penelope, Annette and Deborah. From Bill's we have: Peggy, Lana and Carla. From Fred's we have: Vicki, Francine and Coleen. From George's we have: Anna, Roberta and Georgina. From Frank Longbottom's we have: Sandra, Veronica and Gretchen. Finally from Remus's we have: Sarah, Amelia and Tara. Any objections or questions?"

"What about those of us who are pregnant?" Penelope asked.

"You're all, regardless of flying status, going to have weekly checkups," Mallory said. "I don't see flying as a problem whatsoever during the first few months. After that, I'll keep a close eye on each of you. Any complications and you're off flying status. I anticipate that those of you who choose to continue in the smaller, high performance aircraft will probably be off flight status sooner than those in the bombers and such, but we'll see."

"Regardless," Harry said, "our schedule is such you should complete your full certification before there are issues."

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 – Lake Louise, Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada.

On the shore of a turquoise blue lake fed by snow melt and glaciers and surrounded by steep, towering snow capped mountains that rivaled any one might find anywhere in the world, the Canadian Pacific Railroad built a huge, luxurious hotel reminiscent of the great resorts one might expect to see in the Swiss or Austrian Alps, which at the time was exactly the point. The hotel was the height of luxury when built and remained that way. It was built to encourage tourism and in particular tourism along the transcontinental railroad that lead from the populated eastern portion of Canada to Vancouver on the Pacific Ocean. Kings, Queens and Heads of State had stayed here over its long history and enjoyed the pristine, alpine vistas.

It was early in the morning and Rose Granger was sitting on a huge veranda that looked out over the lake and the mountains. She and her husband Robert had been here about a week as part of their "master plan" to stay as far away from the Troubles as they could. They had left their home the day after their daughter had been sent off to a Safe House and travelled to Paris where they spent a couple of days figuring out what to do next. The witch who called herself Tonks was clearly well connected in ways. She had given them a package of documents and debit cards. There were at least six pairs of each and they were all "valid." The documents included passports and identification papers with their photographs and a history of use. In France, their British Passports were placed in a small box and when Robert and Rose Granger passed through customs to board



their Air France flight to New York, to the international authorities they were now Robert and Rosalyn Chambers of Baltimore, Maryland. Now, on Lake Louise, they were known as Roger and Rebecca "Rose" Caruthers.

Rose had always wanted to see this place and it was far from Britain and the Troubles. They had been here over a week hiking and most recently canoeing on the lake. Bob was up in the room having a lie in and she came down here to look out on the scene, at least when she was not reading her book. This was the perfect vacation in some ways. Not once had they encountered anything that hinted at magic. Okay, maybe some of the local "Indians" they had seen hinted of it, but it was not the kind of magic they knew and were now trying to avoid. Still, as wonderful as this summer had been for them, there was a void in their lives. If only their daughter Hermione could be here with them. They had not so much as heard from or about her in over a month. Perhaps, Rose thought, this was a good thing? Still, she and Bob missed their daughter terribly.

"Mrs. Caruthers?" a voice asked.

Rose looked up from her book and saw one of the Hotel Staff next to her with a package in his hands.

"This package arrived for you this morning," he said handing her the package.

"Thank you," she replied hoping not to look either scared or confused, which she was. Who would know where she and Bob were? She relaxed only slightly when she saw the address label. It seemed to be from Gringotts of Calgary. When the young man left, she opened the package carefully. Inside there was an envelope and a large, leather bound book. Rose opened the letter and was surprised. She recognized the handwriting immediately.

Dear Mummy and Daddy:

I hope this package found you and if it did don't worry. The Bank is on our side of things and can be relied upon to be discreet. Apparently your bank cards are how they are able to find you and since their

secrecy laws make Swiss banks look like blabbermouths, you can be assured no one else knows where you are. (They would not have seen to final delivery if anyone we are concerned about was anywhere within a few hundred miles of your location.)

When I got here I was told we'd figure out how to contact you. I still remember what Dora said that morning when she told us we had to leave and the promise she made to us that this would only be a temporary thing; being apart that is. I can't say if or when it will be safe for us to go home. We know what is happening back there and, although steps have been taken, it's not safe for us. Still, it is safe here and soon we'll bring you here as well. (They could use a couple of good Dentists too!)

Where am I? We were told I was being taken to a safe house. I guess you can kind of call it that. We were also told you could not come because of the magic. That was also true. But both explanations, while true, are incomplete. While I am living in a nice house and it is quite safe, what or where I really am is a safe Country. I can tell you the name of it because it has already appeared in the Daily Prophet: Charenwell. It's an island far from any land and it probably the most magical place on Earth. There are over 40,000 people who live here, between 80 and 90 percent of them are magicals! The rest are not but have magicals in their families or came here knowing all about us. This means NO STATUTE OF SECRECY LAWS. Kind of pointless to hide something everyone knows about!

Travel to and from here is very restricted. They protect the secret of magic by hiding EVERYTHING which means there is little contact with the rest of the world. Well, that's not exactly accurate. The people who live here can come and go (or at least they could until recently) but unless you were born here, you require a connection with the Royal Family of this place or the permission of the Duke or his Prime Minister to even hope to find this place.

(There is one, limited exception. The Lord Mayor [he's like the Prime Minister] can allow people to come if there is no Duke, but he must know those people personally and he must trust them. This country is protected by powerfully vicious wards and if a magical tries to set foot on our shores without permission or if they are a threat, the wards will

... eliminate them. Not even Voldemort and his ilk can hope to survive.)

Charenwell was discovered by a wizard-warrior who was a descendant of Sir Galahad. He established a colony here in his family's name around the Seventh Century. He was also at the time a significant nobleman in Mercia. Here he was known as the Lord of the Isle. In Mercia and later England he had other titles. A Lord of the Isle was instrumental in the events of 1066 as he did not like the Anglo-Saxons or their King and a later Lord saved the English Monarchy for which his Isle was granted independence from the Crown. That was in 1216 and was when he became the Duke of Charenwell.

So anyway, that's where I am in general. I got here because the Lord Mayor knows me personally. You haven't met him but he was one of my Professors at Hogwarts for a year. I also happened to be a close, personal friend of the sole surviving member of the Ducal Family. He, of course, knew about as much as I did about this place when we came here after Hogwarts which is to say nothing.

There's so much I want to tell you about what has happened here, but I need to get this off. Harry is here as well (like that's a surprise?) and has finally ascended to his birthright. He's now the Twenty-Seventh Duke here! We even met Her Majesty the Queen!

Anyway, in a month or two we'll send for you. We have a nice place here and there's a large Guest House with your names on it! I'm enclosing a photo album with this letter so that you can see how wonderful this place is and that your daughter is quite happy here. (I'd be happier if you were with us.)

I miss you loads! (And hope you're at least trying to enjoy yourselves!)

Love,

Hermione.

"Are you okay, Dear?" a voice asked.

Rose looked up from the letter and saw her husband with a concerned look on his face.

"This came for us," she said indicating the book on her lap and the letter. "It's from Hermione."

Robert Granger's eyes lit up as his wife handed him the letter. When he finished reading he said: "Well, at least she's not saying they're married or worse."

"BOB!" Rose exclaimed.

"Just saying..."

"And what if they were?"

"Excuse me?"

"We gave them our blessing, remember. What if they are?"

"Er..."

"She sounds happy, Bob. If these photos show that she looks happy...?"

"I..."

"You'll accept it! They're young, it's true. But our daughter is no child and something tells me neither is he. So long as this Duke thing means he can support them and she's happy, we're going to accept it. Clear?"

Bob nodded. They opened the album to the first page entitled "Our New Home" and saw what looked like a palace in the picture. "Bloody hell," Bob said.

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Lavender Brown was the oldest daughter of Richard and Millie Brown. She was sixteen years old with blonde hair and what she knew was

one of the best racks in Gryffindor at Hogwarts. Her sister Madeline was twelve and would turn thirteen at the beginning of October and was about to start her second year at Hogwarts. Her annoying brother Eric was just ten years old and a part of her wished he had been born a few months later because as it was she'd still be in school when he started.

Lavender and her siblings were a blessing to her parents for more reasons than simply because they were their children. Lavender was "technically" a Half-blood witch. Oddly, however, her true magical heritage was from her non-magical father's side of the family. Her mother was a Muggle Born while her Dad was a Squib and had effectively ended the Ancient line of Brown. The Browns had been magical since the founding of Hogwarts, if not before and Lavender's grandfather had been a Pureblood. He was not one of those supremacist elitist bastards like the boys that stalked about school and Diagon Alley in their Slytherin Robes. Granddad Brown was a Pureblood only because that's just how it happened to work out. Then again, attending a school like Hogwarts, one was bound to meet a nice Pureblood witch, which he had. They had three children, all of whom were Squibs.

Darius Brown was the last magical in a hereditary, patriarchal line that held 25 votes in the Wizengamot. Darius also had political enemies. In recent decades, there were two factions a pliable politician courted: the Pureblood Supremacists or Dumbledore's crowd which the elder Brown did not consider much of a choice. His had been what he saw as a voice of reason and moderation, for it was often his votes and those that followed his lead that affected the outcome on the floor of the Chamber. But, with a Squib for a son, the family knew the Brown vote would fall to a cadet line upon Darius's death. The primary claimant there was a suspected Death Eater and the only other option worshiped Dumbledore like a god. Neither were viable options in Darius's mind.

Lavender knew some of the story. Darius had kept a close eye on the classes at Hogwarts around the age of his son Richard and in particular used the position he then held on the Board of Governors to attend all the Sortings. He was taking note of all the Muggle Born girls as they entered hoping to arrange a marriage with one of them

and his non-magical son. Darius was not so foolish as to believe that Pureblood custom was observed by Muggles and this was more along the lines of "matchmaking" rather than arranging a marriage. But he also knew that it was unlikely any witch other than a Muggle Born would consent to court much less marry a Squib. Fortunately, Muggle Borns had no such prejudices. It was critical for Darius that his son married a witch because that would increase the chance that the boy would have a magical child, and preferably a magical son. Darius could bypass the cadet lines in his will and pass his seat to a magical grandson, although the political clout of being Head of an Ancient House was gone regardless.

Millie was three years younger than Richard Brown and was a Muggle Born witch. Darius had an eye on her as a possible match the moment she was sorted into his old house. He used his family elves to learn about her family and found that they were less than pleased about her magical status. The truth was no one should treat their daughter the way those people did! Darius used his political pull to get the Ministry to intervene in the abusive situation and had the girl placed with his family the summer before her second year, assuming magical guardianship over her. Had he wanted to, he could have arranged her marriage to his son right then and there. But Darius had little use for such things and besides the girl deserved better than the loveless marriage most of his Pureblood associates had been forced into. Fortunately for Darius, it never came to that. Millie and Richard hit it off immediately. In time, they fell for each other and married the day after she finished Hogwarts.

Lavender knew this story and thought it was so romantic. Throw in the danger aspect and it was even better than the trashy novels she read – of course being as it was her parents, she didn't want to read about what they did behind closed doors even though that was usually the best bits of the book. The couple married in 1978 at the height of the war. Squibs and Muggle Borns were not categories conducive to a romantic "happily ever after" as they were both targets for the depredations of the Death Eaters. The Browns all knew this and also knew that the Death Eaters suspected Darius had allowed this "unnatural" union to occur so the vermin could sire a magical spawn that would cut off the Death Eater cadet line of the Brown family from what nature intended. Richard and Millie lived behind the

formidable wards of the Brown estate for the rest of the war and it was there that Lavender was born. As much as she didn't like her little brother, Lavender knew he was the primary heir to the Brown votes. She also knew Granddad hoped for more options. The old coot had even gone so far as to suggest she get busy, find a beau and get to breeding!

That was a week ago when he made that suggestion. Actually, he had probably been hinting at it for years, but last Monday he made it clear that he felt she should "get it over with" as soon as possible. Much as she wanted a hot boyfriend, steamy sex and eventually all the rest, she really didn't need Granddad pushing her into it. It's not like there were that many good choices out there! She was a Brown, after all, and that meant she was expected to marry a Gryffindor. Face it, most of the really hot boys were not Gryffs. The older Gryffindor boys she had gone out with only wanted two things: to play with her ample boobs and shag her silly. Their attempts at the former was usually allowed, but the later earned them a knee to their eagerness. In her own year she had dated Seamus Finnegan for a while, mainly because he would settle for a blow job and was a fair kisser. But she didn't see him as a long term thing. Ron Weasley was cute but a first class jerk. Dean Thomas wasn't her type at all. Harry Potter was probably out of her league, certainly never noticed her even after she had developed and clearly was head over heels for the most unlikely girl in her dorm. That left Neville Longbottom who had grown into a really looker and was very nice, but was far too shy to make a move and would probably soil himself if she tried to be forward.

She was thinking she might have to look at the lower years for her serious boyfriend potential and was thinking about writing to her best friend Parvati to discuss the upcoming year and its dating prospects when she suddenly found herself somewhere other than her bedroom. It was a vast, vaulting space with tall, tropical plants and comfortable looking couches and chairs here and about. She looked around in confusion and watched as another girl seemed to materialize out of thin air. She recognized the sandy haired witch immediately, but was even more confused.

"Sally-Anne?" Lavender asked.

The girl blinked, obviously just as disoriented as Lavender was and looked at the speaker. "Lavender?" she asked. "Oh my God! Where are we? What happened?"

"No idea?" Lavender said. "I was in my room at home and now I'm here."

"I was out gardening," Sally-Anne said.

"What happened to you?" Lavender asked. "I mean you weren't at school last year."

"Not at Hogwarts," Sally-Anne replied. "After that tournament and the dead boy and all the stuff my first three years? Mum and Dad pulled me out. Too dangerous."

Lavender snorted. "It was almost as bad this last year what with toad face and all."

"Toad face?"

"Long story. So, where'd you go then? Your parents take you out of magic altogether?"

Sally-Anne shook her head. "No, just transferred to another school near home. It's called St. Georges and in many ways I liked it better. No Slytherins, no Snape, no ghosts trying to teach history." She chuckled. "Professor Jackson actually studied history, you know, at a real university. Says the stuff they teach us is at best utter rubbish. It was almost my favorite class. But what happened to us?"

The two looked around and saw three younger girls also looking confused.

"You go to Hogwarts," one of them said pointing to Lavender.

Lavender nodded. "And you?"



"The three of us are roommates there," the girl said. "Hufflepuffs. Just finished Third Year. I'm Morgan Carlson. This is Jenny Faulken and Elaine Manning."

"Lavender Brown," Lavender said. "I was Fifth Year in Gryffindor. This is Sally-Anne Perks. She was my roommate through Fourth Year."

"This some kind of Hogwarts thing?" Jenny asked.

"No idea," Lavender said. "We're just as confused as you are, if that helps."

"Any of you have wands?" Morgan asked. "Mine's at home."

"Shame on you," Lavender giggled pulling hers, "with all that is happening? You should never not have it."

"Sorry."

"Hem Hem," a voice said causing the four who were at Hogwarts the last year to jump and look at the voice.

"Parvati!" Lavender scolded. "You know how much we all hate Toad Woman!" But she was laughing. If Parvati was here it couldn't be too bad.

"Hey Lav," Parvati said. "And Sally-Anne?"

Sally-Anne nodded. "Hi Parvati. What's going on?"

"Certain enemies desired bad things for you," Parvati said. "Not just you lot, a lot of us. Certain friends intervened so now you are here. You lot were at greatest risk, but your families are as well and we'll be figuring a way to bring them here as well. Like Hogwarts, you're to be sorted. Well, you already have been chosen for your new houses. It will all be explained. For now, I will hand you your House Robes."

She handed Lavender the first one.

"This is a bath robe," Lavender noted.

"And a really nice, soft, warm and comfortable one," Parvati replied. "For now it just tells us where you go. But it's the best robe I ever had for a bath or a cover up so... Here's your's Sally-Anne," she finished handing Sally-Anne a different colored robe with a large "H" on it. She passed out the remaining robes to the other three girls after calling their names.

"We're to be in different Houses?" one of them asked. "But they're my friends."

"Different idea here," Parvati said. "Yes, like Hogwarts your Houses are your family here. But unlike Hogwarts, your friends are your friends without regard to Houses and such. Now follow me and our - Headmistress - will explain exactly what is going on."

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - Dover, U.K.

Alan Grant was sixty-eight and had recently retired from his job as an engineer for Britain's National Rail. He had almost fifty years on the job and he was good at it. Throughout his career he had been pushed and pleaded with to move into management but his love was driving trains. Sitting at a desk never sat well for him. He was tempted once. That was twenty-three years ago and he almost went that way. But his daughter disappeared and being labor he could find time to search for her. His search was a failure. He never heard from her or saw her again. It was considered an atypical situation and ruled a kidnapping and murder with no suspects or body. Driving his trains gave him peace he could not find. He missed his Mallory, his little baby doll. His wife Maria was able to put it behind her, or so it seemed. He never did.

An owl fluttered through the window. This was no surprise to Alan. He had three surviving children and nine grandchildren all of whom were magical and this was their preferred method of sending post. The owl was a post owl and held out its leg so he could retrieve the large letter attached. That was odd, he thought. He got regular posts from his children and such so they were not the burdens this bird was forced to carry. He removed the bundle and then gave the bird a

huge piece of steak for its effort. He had long ago learned that while post owls would accept money, they were far more interested in food. He opened the letter, but did not recognize the handwriting...

Dear Mum and Dad:

I'm sorry for the length of this letter, but it has been twenty-three years. I did not run away and obviously was not killed as I assume the Muggles told you. I'm your Mallory. Included in this are pictures that I hope prove it...

Maria Grant returned from shopping several hours later and found her Husband weeping in their living room.

"Alan?" she asked.

"She's alive, Dear," he said after several minutes. "She's alive!"

"Who is?"

"Our Mallory!"

"Oh?" Maria's voice cracked.

"She's alive and well," Alan said. "She's a Healer and a Doctor! Got her degree from a real University and all of that! She says she's met a wonderful young man and ... she wants all of us to join her and her new family, Maria. She's having a ..."

"But she'd be thirty-nine!"

"She's a Doctor, dear. Her letter says there's some kind of magic involved that means it's not a problem! She's alive!"

"What are we to do?"

"She wants us all to move there," Alan said. "We're all in danger here..."

"Michael has said as much," Maria nodded noting the conversations she had with her eldest child.

"Mallory says it's safe where she is," Alan replied. "She says it's safe for all of us! She said people will be by to talk to us but ...."

"Are you sure this isn't some trick?"

"Read the letter! See the pictures! Then tell me!"

Maria nodded. She read the long letter and saw the pictures. There were allusions and phrases in the letter that told her that her darling Mallory was writing it. The wording was so specific and so subtle Maria knew two things. First, it was her long lost daughter. Second, there was no trick, no magic that would have caused her to word certain sections the way it was worded. Her little Mallory was truly alive and well! She too cried her eyes out when she finished.

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

And elf had told her to be in this room at this time. Connie looked around and saw a small and round table with four chairs and took her seat. She waited for several minutes before three others joined her. She knew them now. They were Hermione, Luna and Ginny.

Lunch was served before any of the others said anything. Connie was worried.

"Did I do something wrong?" she asked.

"Not at all," Hermione said. "We're here to talk about our Harry."

"I'm not foolish enough to think that I can take him from you!"

"That's not why you're here," Luna said.

"Given our bonds, even if you wished that you would fail," Ginny added.

"We want your help, Connie," Luna said.

"Oh?" Connie replied with confusion.

"The four of us have something none of our other sisters have," Ginny said. "We were all Harry's friends before all of this. You and I could well have been his Consorts under different circumstances. I was his friend. You were his first of all of us..."

"But that Wizard...!" Connie protested.

"He screwed us all," Hermione replied. "And when his screwing us did not work, he fucked us all over. Ginny's right. Of all of us now bound to Harry, any one of us could have been his one and only. You should have been. You were his first true friend."

"What are you saying," Connie asked in confusion. "What do you want from me? Damn it I'm Harry's girl! You all are!"

"There are Harry's girls and then there are Harry's girls," Luna said.

"We were his friends first," Ginny added.

"We, of all the others loved him," Hermione said. "We loved him before all of this."

"And that makes us a special part of all of this," Luna said. "We must never forget we loved him before all this. We all would have accepted this: to be with him forever, to be his friend forever, to submit ourselves for and to him forever. Can you honestly say there's not another you would willingly do that for? You only knew him when he was younger, but is there a better boy out there?"

"No," Connie whimpered a little. "Harry was the standard. All others paled before it."

"We loved him, truly we did, before others tried to mess with our heads and lives," Luna said.

"He was and is the only boy I'd ever want," Ginny added. "I'll admit that when I was ten or so, I worshiped the so called 'Boy Who Lived.'"

He saved my life, you know. He could have taken me then and there by magic. He didn't. He let me be and became my friend and I know now that had I found another right Wizard in time, he would have been happy for me as any true friend should."

"We asked you here, Connie, because like each of us we think you would have died for him before all this," Hermione said. "We think you were his true friend before all this as we are and were."

"Harry does not need fame, fortune or harem," Luna said.

"He needs true friends and true love," Ginny added. "We can't escape that he has all of us."

"But we can and need to see that he has more to live for than himself," Hermione said. "We want our children to know their father."

"And, as Hermione has observed, our Harry has this saving people thing," Ginny said. "That 'Boy Who Lived' in stories is nothing compared with our Harry and that's what's scary. He ... Will ... Die ... For ... Us!"

"Honorable though it may be," Luna added, "it's not his destiny. But a part of him sees it as such."

"It's up to us, Connie," Hermione said. "We must let him do things we cannot help but fear. But we must give him reason to come back from those things. Until us, he never knew friendship or love. We must make him cherish those things. He must come back to us in the end."

"It's up to us to bring him through this," Ginny added. "The others are important to him too, but we were in a way bound to him without magic or spell long before this summer."

"We are his friends," Luna added. "We live for him because he is our friend."

"Help us help Harry?" Hermione pleaded.

Connie nodded. "He is and always was my friend. I want my children to be his. I want them to know their Daddy."

The other three witches smiled.

"You're not pregnant yet," Ginny observed.

"Neither are you or Luna," Connie said. "But unless he does something stupid, all of us will be soon."

"And our job is no stupid," Hermione chuckled.

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - Amalfi, Italy.

David Greengrass was enjoying his time in Italy. He had rented this villa through a Muggle agent and a Muggle bank and loved the view of the sea from high on the bluff overlooking the town on the coast below. It was so peaceful here and so far removed from the chaos in Britain. He only wished his fortune was not at the expense of two of his daughters, but he was promised they would be happy. Still, he was their father and worried about them and wondered whether they were or ever could be happy in life.

"I never meant for this to happen," he said as he had every day since he was forced to sell his precious girls away.

An owl fluttered down before him. It was unlike any he had ever seen before. Owls were not this elegant white color. They were rarely ever this big. The owl stared at him as he stared at it and held out its leg. He saw a large packet attached.

"You poor dear," he said as he removed the packet. "There's bacon and such on the table. Help yourself to a proper feed."

The owl hooted and fluttered off to the food laden table and began to feast.

David Greengrass opened the packet. He knew immediately he should have waited for his wife Vivian and his remaining daughters Rachel, Maria and Pattie to return from their trip to the beach, but he

could not help himself. Daphne and Astoria had written him a letter! Well, it was for all of them, but he could not wait to read it.

When he finished he wondered about things. He had always hoped the best for them. He always hoped that they would marry one day and be happy. When he was forced to sell them, he was certain, despite Harry's promises, they would be little more than servants. He was clearly wrong. They were his wives, that much was certain. He was not certain he was okay with that, but he could read and see. They said a picture paints a thousand words and the pictures of his missing daughters painted far more than that. They were that Harry's wives and quite happy with it. He had never seen them smile so much or so genuinely, at least not for anyone but him. His daughters were happy! Harry promised much, but to deliver on that bit?

His wife returned with his remaining daughters. She saw the expression on his face.

"David?" she asked with concern.

"Lady Harry Potter and Lady Harry Black have sent us a letter," David said with a smirk.

"Who?" his daughter Rachel asked.

"Your sisters," David said. "They're married!"

"David?" his wife asked.

"Come," he replied, "they sent us a huge letter and loads of pictures!"

"They did?" the girls asked.

David Greengrass nodded with the first genuine smile the others had seen since they fled Britain.

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

"You knew about this?" Lavender accused. "You said nothing?"



"And what was I to say?" Parvati replied. "Someone sold you off? I could not change that! This is your life now! Do you think I wanted this a few days ago?"

"A few days ..." Lavender began. "You mean now...?"

"Now I see my life is here," Parvati said. "I'm not thrilled it had to be this way, Lav. But it is. Moreover, my wizard is ... is ... is freaking amazing! Damn it this isn't just the sex, which is mind blanking bloody awesome. This is the whole deal. I .. Am ... His ... Wife! Got the ring and all of that. Got permission as well, Lav. Love bonded and I'll be knocked up as well in a month or two and I ... want ... it!"

"He's that good?" Lavender asked.

"So's yours I'm told," Parvati giggled. "But that's not it. He and yours have promised all of us a life. You heard Minerva ... sorry, Professor McGonagall, we were supposed to become whores in every sense of the word. We're not that here and never will be. I am his wife. I will die that way as well. I am coming to love him and will love him and that's all anyone should do and he loves me too. What more could I want?"

"Is yours mine?" Lavender asked.

"No," Parvati said. "Sally-Anne is. But you know yours as well. If what you told me was true, you just hit the miracle!"

Parvati then smiled and left Lavender alone. Aside from herself, Sally-Anne was the only other one left after their lunch and she was following Parvati from the room.

"No worries, Lavender," a voice said.

Lavender saw another friend waiting. "Hannah?"

"My husband awaits us, Lav," Hannah said. "He picked you personally, you know."

"He ... he did?"

Hannah nodded.

"Will it hurt?" Lavender asked.

"If he's your first probably," Hannah said. "It did for me at first. But you won't mind if you don't mind."

"What's that mean?" Lavender said with an accusing voice.

"I'm sure our Neville will do his best to make it easy for you."

"Neville? As in Longbottom?"

Hannah nodded. "Your dream come true," she said. "And your dream falls far short of reality. But..."

"But what?"

"Well, Neville's birthday is tomorrow so unless you really hate him, take today's bond and nothing more."

"Why?"

"Think about it. You can offer him so much more from yourself if McGonagall gave you the same talk she did us. But what better birthday present can you offer than all of it?"

"I'll keep that in mind," Lavender said. A few hours later she really understood Hannah's point. She would have offered Neville everything right then and there. It would be so much more special to wait just a day...

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - London, U.K.

Sean Campbell was an agent with State Security, also known as MI-5. He was a Merlin Club type because all of his children were magical. He did not trust the magical world. He did not fear it, but his gut said do not trust it. When his eldest daughter left home he knew he was not paranoid. He had taught her bits of his craft. There were

techniques which could avoid detection by enemies that would allow friends to know whether you were acting on your own or not.

One technique was in letter writing. You had a trusted handler or contact who knew certain things, words or phrases. You could write the most convincing of letters but if certain innocuous things were missing, your contact would know you were in trouble or they were. He taught this craft to his kids. A truthful letter had to have seven clues to truthfulness. Those clues might be either special moments or key words or phrases. A letter with less than seven clues would tell him they were in trouble.

Stacy's letters for the last few years had no clues. She was in serious trouble! He made sure she was a top priority missing person as soon as the relevant time period was up for the police and had been hounding the magicals to the extent that he could. Nothing. Nothing but the occasional letter saying in code both that she was still alive but in real danger. Stacy was in danger! His little girl was in danger and no one could help him!

Another of those damnable letters arrived that afternoon. Sean could not help but read it.

The seven codes were there! That mean whatever the letter said was true. Parts were god awful, worst case stuff. His daughter had been sold into slavery and used as a whore for years! He wanted blood! But...

My Enemy fell into debt and everything he ever had of value was sold, including me. His creditor took me in. My new friend's name his Harry. He took me in and has shown me, after years of abuse and worse, that I am a person of value. He gave me back what my Enemy stole. He gave me back my personality and my humanity. He has shown me love, not the kind that is physical, but the true kind, Daddy. He made me whole again.

He's mine now and I am his. I am his by my choice alone. I am his Wife! I LOVE HIM, DADDY.

So much so, it seemed, that his long, lost daughter wanted him and their family to be together. Sean knew enough to know this was no love potion. His daughter had been rescued by some knight in shining armor, this was true. She saw it that way. Sean was willing to give her and this man a chance, but knew the rescue fantasy was usually just that. Maybe it would be true for Stacy. But he held no such illusions. Still, regardless, his darling Stacy was safe it seemed.

He opened the next letter.

It was from his boss.

Due to certain qualifications heretofore not known, you are hereby reassigned to our new field office at the British Consulate in Charenwell. You and your family will be advised of your relocation specifics in due course.

What the bloody hell?

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

"Wow!" Sally-Anne said as soon as she could think and breath and talk again. Harry was still inside of her and she did not mind one bit. He was so amazing. "Wow!" she said again.

"Wow?" Harry asked.

"That was amazing, Harry!" she replied. "Can you do it again?"

Harry nodded. "Any incentive?"

"I, Sally-Anne take you Harry as my husband in heart, soul, mind, body and magic of my own free will from this day forward until death do us part one another. I want your babies!"

"I accept all with all that I am, Sally-Anne," Harry smiled. "Now be impressed."

Sally-Anne gasped as she felt her Harry grow inside of her.

MONDAY, JULY 29th, 1996 - Ristorante Italiano, Pottersport, Charenwell.

"Yo! Longbottom!" a voice boomed as Neville and Lavender entered. Each family had its traditions on a bonding day and Neville's was to take his new girls out to dinner and dancing in Pottersport. This place was the best, in his opinion. It was arguably almost the only as it was one of the few that offered dancing after the meal. He had found the place before any of the others arrived and were bonded to him and had taken Susan and Amber here as well. The staff here and the patrons knew what was going on and knew why and admired him for it. He was the face of bonding for Pottersport and therefore the face of their Duke yet they knew his time was personal.

"Neville! Over here!" the voice yelled.

Neville saw it's owner and had to walk over.

"Dudley," he said.

"Party time, my man," Dudley Dursley replied. "You and ... well you two are invited."

"This is Lavender," Neville said stiffly.

"Her parents were cruel," Dudley said bowing. "Either that or generous to a fault to the flower or color which bares this lovely's name."

"Oh my!" Lavender said.

"Tis true my lass," Dudley replied. "Be you not bound and me not smitten, but I am smitten so there we are. I'm Dudley."

"Harry's cousin," Neville added.

"And quite the gentleman," Lavender said, "so long as he knows I'm taken."

"Not to fear," Dudley said, "my heart lies elsewhere. Now I invite you lot to join us."

Reluctantly, Neville and Lavender agreed.

Lavender thought it was a wonderful meal. True, she hoped for a private time with Neville but all things considered this was not too bad. This Dudley guy was with his serious girlfriend and her family and others. The others were a family by the name of Jameson and the eldest daughter was apparently Harry's younger sister of whom he knew nothing before this summer. That made her this Dudley's First Cousin and all of that. Dudley and Mr. Jasper disappeared just before the meals arrived and came back smiling sometime later. Lavender did not know exactly when as the food here and her conversations with Neville and the others were a severe distraction.

A high pitched scream interrupted their dessert. They had a lovely meal together and with the others up to that moment. At that moment, Dudley was on the floor and Clara, who might have been half his size had pinned him and was kissing him all over. Eventually sanity returned and the two blushing teens returned to the table.

"I take it that was a yes?" Clara's father said.

Clara nodded.

A loud gong sounded gathering the attention of everyone in the place.

"I have an announcement to make," Clara's father said. "My daughter is now engaged to be married to her one true love. He is Mr. Dudley Dursley, cousin of our Duke and most recently of Pottersport!"

The crowd cheered the news.

"No date as of yet," Mr. Jasper said. "They are still young. But hear ye all, House Jasper approves this match!"

Another cheer arose.

"And, we shall also hoist our glass and allow the opening dance to be joined by Lord Longbottom and his newest Miss Lavender who have blessed our company and my family table tonight!"

"Huzzah!" the crowd yelled. Neville and Lavender had no choice when the music started but to join Dudley and Clara in the first dance ... any many thereafter.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

#### Harry James Potter, age 15.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (2/14/80) (SG-5); CONCUBINE (POTTER) 7/29/96.

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.

3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle Martin, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura Carlson, age 14 (12/28/81) (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (BILL WEASLEY) 7/29/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille Tinker, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue Brown, age 16 (3/13/80) (Gr-5); CONCUBINE (NEVILLE) 7/29/96.



Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) Bates, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn Faulken, age 14 (11/3/81) (Hu-3); CONCUBINE (FRED) 7/29/96.

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy Watson, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda Manning, age 14 (Hu-3) CONCUBINE (GEORGE) 7/29/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).P\*
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
4. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).P\*
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE: A CHANGING WORLD

TUESDAY, JULY 30th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell.

"Oh my head!" Dudley groaned as he woke up the next morning. He had far too much to drink last night, which was also far more than he intended. He now realized he had no idea where he was.

"Here," a pretty voice said softly, "drink this."

Dudley drank whatever it was.

"God that's awful," he complained. "What was that?"

"A potion to counter the effects of alcohol," the voice said. "Basically it cures hangovers. Mum said to give you some the moment you woke up."

Dudley's head began to clear almost immediately. He suddenly realized where he was! He was in Clara's bed and she was under the covers with him!

"I didn't mean to..." he began.

"Nothing happened last night that you need to feel bad about," Clara giggled. "I can assure you, you were the perfect gentlemen. Then again, you did fall asleep before I had even taken your shoes off. You're very heavy when you're asleep."

"Sorry."

"You are also a very nice pillow and thankfully you don't snore too badly."

"I didn't mean too..."

"Oh hush! If I'm going to be angry at anyone this morning it's Daddy and Granddad. They're the ones that got you all snockerred! Do ... do you remember anything about last night?"

"I think so," Dudley said. "Let's see, while we were waiting for you to get all dressed up ... did I tell you how pretty you were?"

"You did," Clara giggled, "many times."

"You're dad offered me a drink. Firewhiskey."

"I thought as much."

"It didn't seem too bad," Dudley said. "I've had regular whiskey before and that stuff wasn't as strong, but it did warm you up."

Clara nodded. "Never had it myself. In terms of alcohol, the single malts they distill here to sell in Britain are way stronger. Firewhiskey has about half of the alcohol. But it is magical. It's basically a watered down whiskey that they add some magical ingredients to after it's distilled. You can get roaring drunk on the stuff like anything, but the real effects are the magic. That's what made it so warming. It also lowers your inhibitions a lot. You won't say or do anything that you would never say or do, but there are things you might not have said nor done that, with a few shots of Firewhiskey you will say or do. And in case you're wondering, you were mostly sober until later when the wine and champagne began flowing."

"I asked you to marry me," Dudley gasped. "Sorry."

"You don't want to marry me one day?" Clara pouted.

"No! That's not it. I ... it's only been ... I do, I think, but..."

"It's only been about two weeks?"

Dudley nodded.

"I had the same concerns, My Darling," she said softly. "It is rather fast and we are rather young. After you fell asleep, I had a long talk with Mum. She figures in the important way that you and I have been together even longer than she and Daddy were before they got engaged."

"Oh?"

"Mum and Dad dated for about six months before he proposed. True, they were a little older than us when they started, but only about eighteen months older. Mum figures they spent about six hours a week together while they were dating and before they became engaged. That's about a hundred and thirty-six hours together. That's the important time, she says. That's where you learn about the other person and learn whether the two of you can be a couple and love each other and all of that. She's kept tabs on us since we started seeing each other. On the calendar, it's been a little over two weeks. But we've been together about ten hours every day since we met up on the bluff. That's a hundred and sixty hours as of last night. More since. Basically, compared to my Mum and Dad, Dudley, you were dragging your heels," she added with a giggle.

"I do love you, you know," Dudley said. "In more ways than I can count. You were and are my first true friend."

"I love you too, Dudley."

"I'm not magical."

"And I don't care," Clara said. "Love is one magic all humans share. In many ways it might be the only magic that truly matters."

"Still, how's this supposed to work? We're engaged and all of that but..."

"Well, it's not like I'm going to start thinking about bridesmaids and all of that, Dudley. It's not like we have to get married anytime soon."

"Still," Dudley said, "for thinking purposes, how soon could we actually marry?"

"Complex answer," Clara giggled.

"As many of yours are," Dudley chuckled.

"Right then," Clara said entering her magical world lecture mode, which Dudley loved. "Like most the world, as a witch I am legally and adult at seventeen. Here, however, that rule applies to all people regardless of ability so a year from October we could marry as that's my birthday you know."

"I do indeed. It might be a few months off but I am thinking about your Sweet Sixteen and getting something special for you."

"What? What are you getting me?"

"Nope! Can't say! Won't say! It'd ruin it."

"Fine," Clara pouted.

"So if you have to be seventeen," Dudley said, "then why is Harry married?"

"There are exceptions," Clara said. "At seventeen you can marry because you're a legal adult. That means you don't need parents' permission or anything. But there are exceptions. Harry was legally emancipated upon his godfather's death."

"But Hermione was not," Dudley said. "He's now married to a lot of witches and some are even younger than Hermione. Two of them are only fourteen!"

"Their marriage is by virtue of a magical bond, Dudley. That trumps everything. The consort bond requires three things to work: first the witch and her husband to be must be mature enough physically to have children, second they must be emotionally mature enough for the bond to take hold and finally, they must take a leap of faith as it were. When the bond forms, they are married and will be forever. It is the ideal form of marriage and also fairly rare. There are wonderful marriages out there that never created the Consort Bond as that leap of faith bit is harder than you might think. But once the bond takes, they are legally married and legally adults regardless of their age. I don't know enough about the Concubine Bond to tell you how that fits in, although it certainly does 'cause that's how the others are bound and married to Harry."

Dudley nodded. "I had been thinking about it, you know," he said. "But not so soon."

"I know Dudley," Clara said. "And believe me Daddy had an earful from Mum about the Firewhiskey and will get another from me later. It's not fair to us. I think we are meant to be together in the end, Dudley, I really do. But it should have been at our pace and our time, not because of Firewhiskey. I could have said no, you know."

"But you didn't."

"No, I did not. I believed you when you told me how much I mean to you, Dudley."

"You mean everything."

"And I feel the same way about you Dudley. That's why I said yes when you asked."

"You don't mind being engaged to me?" Dudley said later.

"No Dudley, I don't," Clara replied. "I really don't." She did not tell him that she thought it was more likely than not she and he could complete the Consort Bond. That Bond was a witch thing and was the only bond that could affect a Muggle like Dudley. She was still debating when to attempt it. Certainly, she would make no such effort before her sixteenth birthday. The date itself had no meaning. The bond could work now. She just wouldn't feel right about it before then. Besides, she would turn sixteen in October. She could wait that long, especially because Dudley was not pushing for more between them than a good, toe curling snog.

TUESDAY, JULY 30th, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

"You two have been busy," Minerva said looking at Parvati and Padma who were seated at a table in the library along with a pile of old books and pages of notes. "You do realize that today is technically a day off?"

"We want to finish this," Padma said.

"And just what are you working on?"

"Something about all of this is puzzling," Padma said. "I thought it was just me at first. I wondered why bonding with Harry seemed so right. It shouldn't have, you know. I know the nature of the original bond is such that I could not resist him. But I also know that while I would do whatever he asked of me, my mind remained my own. I should have been screaming in protest. I should have been angry, terrified and all of that and it would only be natural if I blamed Harry for what was happening to me and my sister. I know others felt that way about their first time with their first wizard."

Minerva nodded. "I was fifteen when I was bound to my first. I was terrified more than anything else and confused. I could not believe something like that could happen. I didn't want it to happen but could not stop it either."

"You love bonded with him," Padma began.

"A few years later," Minerva replied. "It took a while for him to help me realize I could have a wonderful life. It was a bond, not a sentence at least not with him. I eventually realized he could, would and did love me for me. But it took time."

"Part of my point," Padma said. "I didn't feel anything like that. As soon as he kissed me, I had no doubts whatsoever that this was what I wanted, this was how it was meant to be. I wanted him to be my first and was eager to please him because I wanted to, not because the bond made me."

"It was the same for me," Parvati said. "True, I was a little more experienced when it came to boys before Harry, but that was always my choice. I should have felt doing Harry was wrong because it was not my choice at the time. Don't get me wrong. Had he invited me to inspect one of the broom closets at school, I probably would have done it if I felt he wanted more from me than an afternoon's pleasure. But I should have felt something very different when he kissed me. I



most certainly should not have been wanting him to have his way with me like I did."

"The odd thing is," Padma continued, "every one of us wanted it. Daphne and Astoria couldn't wait for him to take them their first time. Ginny should have been upset about her bonding, but loved every minute of it. Katie and Connie were the same way as was Sally-Anne. We were all virgins and our first time was not as we had imagined and yet every one of us has absolutely no regrets and will let Harry take us until we can't walk! True, we all knew Harry from before to some extent. But Tabatha didn't and she loved her bonding as well. Every one of us lost our virginity arguably against our will and yet we were all love bonded to him within a day at the most! That should not have happened! Most of us should feel violated and betrayed and should resent him for taking us and binding us to him. Yet we don't."

"And it's not just Harry's Harem," Parvati giggled. "We know it's almost the same with Neville's group."

"There are a few who have not..." Minerva began.

"They will," Padma said. "They would have earlier, but decided to wait until sometime today. They are offering their love bond as their birthday present for him."

"It's a pity we didn't think of that," Parvati said. "But no regrets."

"So," Padma continued, "while we haven't had a chance to talk with the girls in the other Houses, we know many of them have taken the bond and most if not all of the others will in time. At least that's what Angelina and Alicia told Katie who told us. Again, that should not be the case. We can understand the others, the ones that had horrid lives as concubines before they came here. They would see this bonding as an opportunity and not an enslavement or worse. Even so, it would only make sense that given their experiences with wizards they too might wait a bit to see if this is really what it appears to be, and yet they did not either."

"Then there's the girl sex," Parvati added pointing to a nearby table where Hermione, Luna, Connie, Katie, Sally-Anne and Karen were currently engaged in a group naked activity.

"That's hardly all that surprising," Minerva said. "It happens all the time at school and has for as long as I can remember."

"Ah," Padma said, "but usually when a girl decides not to have girl sex, they tend to stay that way. Only six of us were girl sex types before this summer: Katie, Ginny, Parvati and I were and Fiona and Karen were before they were first bound. The rest were not. You weren't."

Minerva nodded.

"And now all nineteen of us are. Sally-Anne's first time was yesterday although you wouldn't know by looking now. Six out of nineteen was about average. In Neville and Susan's house, Susan Hannah, Pattie, Leanne and Amber were the only ones. Now they all are as well. The question is why? Why did we accept our bonds so easily? Why did you and the others suddenly get into girl sex so willingly? I know you were never told to."

"It just seemed appropriate somehow," Minerva said. "I may not be young, but I still have needs and Harry cannot always be there. Besides, you youngsters have needs as well. You need to have sex to stabilize your magic so it's only logical as we are family that I be available to help out in that regard."

"Something other than logic is at play here," Padma said. "I thought as much all through my bonding and all the times after. It wasn't until I was good and shagged out and falling asleep that it dawned on me what might be happening. It was something our mother told us about from India. There are harems there, you know. But, there's also a very special kind of harem. It comes into existence when a wizard bonds with several witches. Specifically, it forms if there are love bonds with several witches. Once that happens, they become one in all things, including lovers. Moreover, if it happens, the bonds become both easier to form for new witches and far more powerful than they would be otherwise."

"Does this bond have a name?" Minerva asked.

Padma nodded. "In English, it's called a Coven."

"Sweet Merlin!" Minerva said. "But those are thought to be dark! Having a coven, belonging to one, is illegal!"

"In Britain," Padma said. "Then again, any magic that weakens pureblood lines and the status of wizards is considered dark. Coven magic would do both. The wizard is the center of the magical bonds, but he is also an equal part of the bonds. As such, he is not in absolute charge of the Coven or the resulting families. Likewise, Coven magic has nothing to do with bloodlines. A witch is a witch. Her prior status disappears when she is bound and by magic, her lineage becomes that of her husband. Under the old laws before Covens were proscribed, a Muggle Born witch bound to a Pureblood wizard within a Coven became a Pureblood by magic and law. Her children were considered Purebloods. Needless to say, such elevation was frowned upon by the other Purebloods as was the fact that the witch was now equal in all things to her husband.

"In India, there are no such prohibitions. For a witch born into poverty or low Caste, bonding to a Coven can be a desirable option as the wizard is most often wealthy and might well be of higher Caste. The bound witch becomes of the same Caste as her Husband, or the highest Caste witch within the Coven if there is one from a higher Caste than their wizard. It's a form of upward mobility and poor witches often wind up in Covens."

"And what about the powers?" Minerva asked. "The legends say that Covens were abnormally powerful."

"Not really true," Padma said. "We may all realize an increase in magical power, but that's because Harry is so scary powerful. Basically, Covens can share magic. This means that were Harry to get into a duel, he could draw upon our magic rather than exhaust his own core. It works the other way as well, or so the old books say. Likewise, if one of us knows certain magic, it becomes much easier for the others to learn it. For example, you're an animagus. In time,

when the magical bonds become firm, we may be able to that as well. Harry knows the Patronus Charm, which is difficult to learn at all, much less know it to a point where the charm becomes corporeal. Hermione, Ginny and Luna also achieved that Charm as did Neville. Parvati and I did not, however. Now?"

"Expecto Patronum!" Parvati intoned. A silver doe burst forth from her wand, much brighter than anyone would have suspected. "I never got more than a mist before," she added with awe at her creation.

"Expecto Patronum!" Padma added and there was another bright silver doe in the library. "Interesting," she said.

"Oh? Are we doing Patronus Charms?" a voice said and a naked Luna walked over with a naked Sally-Anne. Luna had her wand and an incantation later, a third doe appeared. "That's odd," she said. "Mine used to be a rabbit."

Katie and Hermione also cast the charm. Katie had never succeeded before and was pleased with her silver doe. Hermione's had been an otter before. Now a sixth doe graced the library.

"What happened?" Hermione asked.

Minerva cast hers as well. For years it had been a cat, just like her animagus form. Now it too was a doe. "The manifestation can change," Minerva said. "It usually changes as a result of a life altering experience."

"Such as being bound to Harry," Padma said. "The fact they are all does suggests that. His is a stag and ours have taken the form of its mates. It also supports our idea as to what has happened to us."

"We're a Coven," Parvati added for the others and then explained what they believed that meant.

"This has interesting potential," Minerva mused. "If what you believe is correct, you're saying that it would take little time at all for the lot of you to learn what I know? Or Mallory? Or Dora?"

"Much less time," Padma said. "We still need to learn the spells and such, but rather than a few per month, we could learn several per week, provided one of us already knows them and can do them. Of course, that's just on the practical side. We'd still have to learn the theory the old way if we wish to sit for our exams."

"Still, theory has always been paced to track with the practical side," Minerva said. "If we move faster in the practical, the theory can be accelerated as well since the standard method is to teach the theory as one learns the spells that exemplify the theory in question. Does this Coven thing affect all magical learning?"

"Spell casting for certain," Padma said. "Mum never said anything about potions, Runes or other less active magics."

"And," Parvati added, "it only affects that Coven. There is probably more than one Coven here now and each of them has people with different talent levels and skills. What would be easy for us might be more difficult for the other families and vice versa."

"Then again," Padma added, "it's not like you have to provide in depth training to everyone. So long as one person masters a given skill, the rest will pick it up quickly."

"This could have useful benefits from an educational standpoint," Minerva said absently.

"Again, only for the Covens and each is unique," Padma replied. "But, it would be far easier and quicker for us to reach N.E.W.T. level and beyond than it would be as individuals. That's part of what a Coven is: a collective; a sum far greater than all of its component parts; a community bound together for their common good, whatever that might be."

Minerva looked at the table and saw documents that seemed to have nothing to do with Covens. "What's the rest of this?"

"Oh," Parvati said. "Well, those little books you all wrote tell us House Potter has had Concubines for ages. We're trying to ascertain whether we are the first Coven."

"Are we?" Hermione asked.

Parvati shrugged. "Too early to say. I've been figuring out which of the previous Dukes most likely crossed the magical threshold. There is one, although no firm number. According to Mum, seven magicals bound together usually results in the formation of a Coven, although it could be more or less. Now, these records tell me about how many Concubines each Duke had, but not whether they formed a Coven. I'm hoping that by reading the relevant journals to determine whether others existed in our family's past. Pad and I think it's probable."

"And this is important?" Minerva asked.

"Given your initial reaction to what we've become, knowing we are not unique, not even within this family history, might be a good thing," Padma replied.

"We still get to shag Harry senseless?" Connie asked.

"Of course," Padma smiled. "This doesn't change that bit at all."

"Oh goodie!"

TUESDAY, JULY 30th, 1996 – Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

"Enter!" Kingsley Shacklebolt called out. He was acting Deputy Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement and as such was asked to chair this meeting. Nigel Boggs was with the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures and had been tasked with the Registration. Percy Weasley was from International Cooperation and Kingsley believed he had been sent because that Department wanted nothing to do with this. It was slightly understandable as the government Magical Britain had no ties or relations with Charenwell. Besides, with the I.C.W. audit about to begin, that Department was up to its eyeballs in work.

"Right then," Kingsley said as the two were seated. "What's the status of the registration?"

"Ongoing," Nigel said. "I'd like to think the public is being cooperative, but that is debatable. We have over twenty-one hundred Concubines either registered or whose registration is in progress."

"How many from this Charenwell place?"

"We have no idea," Nigel said. "There only a few of us working this thing. We are overtime just making sure the forms are filled out. Haven't even begun to analyze the information. Does it really matter? A whore is a whore, you know."

"In less than two weeks we need to either cough up the girls or a hundred thousand a head," Kingsley said. "We might not know who those girls are right now, but I'd bet next month's pay they do. Moreover, they've been quite insistent that we return all of the women Dumbledore sold under that damnable law."

"Many will resist," Nigel said. "They consider it valuable property and, after this year's Auction, the few who have said anything want at least a thousand a head in compensation if we take them and sent them overseas."

"We're not there yet," Percy noted. "I mean, all they've been asked to do is register, right? We haven't had to send a single one of them, have we?"

"The Minister wants to avoid paying the reparations," Kingsley said. "Right now, we have no choice but to pay. But the Minister feels if we find the missing girls and send them back, Charenwell might be willing to negotiate a less disruptive alternative. So that means we find them!"

"And their owners?"

"Technically speaking," Kingsley said, "our legal types have noted they are in possession of stolen property, assuming we can figure out which of the Concubines were from Charenwell. Anyone in possession of one of those Concubines can expect confiscation without compensation."

"Some will resist," Nigel said. "At the very least they'll lean on the government to pay for the girls."

"They will be advised they have two choices, they can either sign over the girls to us for ten Galleons, or pay us the amount demanded by Charenwell for reparations and retain possession."

"None of those slags are worth a hundred thousand," Percy exclaimed.

"That is precisely the point," Kingsley said.

"You do realize that regardless of anything else, those whores must be bound to some wizard," Percy added.

"That's not our problem," Kingsley said. "I'm certain the Charenwell people are well aware of that fact. Whether they bind them or not is their matter. We are tasked with identifying them and locating them. I don't even know if Charenwell wants them back or not. This registration is to find them and once found we will offer them to their home country in exchange for renegotiating the reparations. You do know that the demand has been upheld by the I.C.W."

Percy nodded. "The bastards are really enjoying watching us squirm. Dumbledore did us no favors with them."

Kingsley nodded. "Arguably Fudge and some others whose careers are in limbo didn't help matters with the international community either. So the main thing is to find them."

"I'll need more people to review the registrations," Nigel said. "Even then, the form does not specifically ask for the Country of their birth. We'd only be able to figure it out if their place of birth clearly could not be in Britain."

"Shouldn't the school records have such information?" Percy asked.

"It should, but there are six schools to check and thousands of former students to cross-reference. It would take time."



"Which is a luxury we cannot afford," Kingsley said.

"Why not send them copies of the registrations and let them sort it out?" Percy asked. "It's their problem, really."

Kingsley nodded. The truth was that was exactly what the Duke and Lord Mayor wanted. They wanted the list and statistics the registrations would provide because they did not trust the Ministry to give them accurate information on its own. "Nigel, make copies of all complete registrations. We'll send them along to let them know we're trying."

"How? We have no idea where this place is?" Percy protested.

"They are a recognized country in the I.C.W.," Kingsley said. "That means two things. First, they have a seat in that organization which means an office. Second, it also means they have their own Gringotts branch. Surely either would suffice."

TUESDAY, July 30th, 1996 – Gringotts, Pottersport, Charenwell.

Harry was mildly annoyed as he entered the office. Aside from Cissy who was with him, his entire family was having a lie in and day off from what was becoming a hectic schedule – so much for a lazy summer. Harry, however, was not so lucky. Whoever said it was good to be the King had no idea what they were talking about. Today, while his girls had some time off from training, he was still on his Duke schedule. Neville and his family were said to be relaxing by their lake, and Harry somewhat envied his friend for such fortune. It was Neville's birthday and Harry could not blame him for trying for a happy one. Neither of them really had a real birthday before. Tomorrow, it would be Harry's time and he did manage to get that day off. But today, it was Duke business followed by the Birthday dinner at the Manor.

Bill Weasley soon joined them in the office with stacks of parchment.

"The final tally from the confiscations," Bill explained. "Do you want the details, or the general overview?"

Harry looked at the stacks of paper and could tell it might well take days to go through those stacks of paper. "Overview would be fine," he said.

"Well," Bill said, "we've liquidated the delinquent accounts and seized assets, as you are aware. The personal property which we deemed of no immediate or potential value to you has also been sold off, mostly to retailers in the relevant trades. Per your instructions, potions, potions ingredients and anything else deemed of potential value either for the people of Charenwell or your war effort have been retained and shipped from Britain. The shipment arrived in the Port of Darby yesterday and is being warehoused there for the time being. All told, the accounts and sales have generated about one hundred and thirty-seven million Galleons, give or take. That's about four-million per estate or so and we still are about twenty-eight million short of what was owed when interest and penalties are included."

"Bloody hell, Bill!" Harry exclaimed. "That's more than I'm spending on the Manors, Jamestown and the Air Force combined!"

"Almost three quarters of a billion Pounds," Bill nodded. "You need money to make money, you know."

"And I still have a few million Galleons coming!"

"We hope," Bill shrugged. "Every indication is that Dumbledore will pay, although he's really being forced to cut back as it were."

"Disappointing," Harry said. "Cut back? In what way?"

"He's put his lifetime season tickets to the Chudley Cannon matches up for Auction. Not that he uses them much, but those tickets are popular and he has been known to grace some of our more difficult politicians with prime seats, particularly if he wants certain bills either passed or defeated."

"That makes no sense," Harry said, "they're the worst team in the League!"

"Yet the only one that is sold out for all their matches for the next six seasons," Bill said.

"What? I've read Quidditch Through The Ages! In the last century they've finished dead last eighty-five times! The rest of the time they finished second to last. They have the record for the most winless seasons by any team currently playing! They lost a game against the Wilbourne Wasps by a record pasting of 1270 to 80 and it was said the Wasps' Seeker was legally blind!"

"It's not that they lose, it's how they lose!" Bill chuckled. "There's a betting line out there that they are cursed! Anyone who can prove it stands to win a fortune. Seven years ago they had to forfeit a match when every one of their players was too seriously injured to play. Aside from the usual losses to Bludgers, two of them flew into the goals for no apparent reason; one had a severe reaction to a bee sting and one nearly died after being knocked off his broom by a duck as in "quack, quack." They hold the dubious record for having lost a keeper to being eaten by a rouge dragon during the match, and it happened twice! In 1873 they won the league without playing a single match because they were the only team that was not affected by the dragon pox outbreak. People go to see them wreck. One thing about the Cannons, they're entertaining. And, they have the most loyal fans in Britain."

"You'd have to be to support a team like that," Harry chuckled. "Well, either that or no self esteem, or you're just plain mental. And the Ministry?"

"The Ministry is trying to figure a way around it."

Harry nodded. "The Concubine Registration?"

Bill nodded. "My guess is they are trying to find the girls or at least they are trying to look like they are trying to find them."

"What's that mean?"

"It means that they might try to put lipstick on a pig," Bill said. "It's a Muggle expression Dad thought was hilarious. What I'm saying is

they might offer any forty-two girls in the hopes of having you call it even. They probably assume you really don't care. A girl's a girl, right?"

"You know that's not how I see it!"

"I know, Harry. I'm just saying that the Registration seems to be headed in that direction. I've seen the forms. They would not show whether a girl is from Charenwell or Yorkshire. Kingsley is trying to – er – encourage them to turn over the lists to us so that we can find the girls in question and demand them by name and owner."

"Makes sense," Harry said. "But, no deals unless they turn over our girls."

"I wouldn't think otherwise. Moving on?"

Harry nodded.

"Okay, the total consignment of potion, supplies and whatnot is around twelve tons."

"Bloody hell!"

"We think the Death Eaters were stockpiling and just happened to choose the wrong properties to store their hoard. I think we should send the lists of what is here to various people who might be able to make use of the lot."

"Recommendations?"

"Loads of healing potions. We should make those available to the hospitals if needed. There are a fair few that are combat related. You don't have an Auror Corps here, but Frank and Alice Longbottom might be able to help you there. There are a few Potions Masters about. Might want to include them. Oh. And the twins as well."

In their own way, Fred and George Weasley were probably geniuses, but you would never hear that from their mother. She would most likely call them chronic underachievers. The truth was school bored

them to tears. They seemed to spend all of their times working on new magical pranks and gags and that was almost the truth. The only class they found remotely challenging was transfiguration. Potions was a waste of time as they were probably at or beyond O.W.L. levels when they started school. That and Snape was even more useless than Binns and five out of the seven Defense Professors they had.

When it came time for their O.W.L.s, the only reason they bothered to pass any of them is they were not ready to drop school and open their joke shop. But they had no intention of killing themselves for marks they knew they would never need. It wasn't like they wanted to work for the government or something. They got three O.W.L.s each, severely disappointing their mother who reminded them over and over again that Bill and Percy each got eleven O.W.L.s (neither having taken Divination) and Charlie got nine, but as he was Quidditch Captain his last three years, their mother would overlook his failing mark in History. What Molly Weasley seemed to ignore was how well the Twins did on the three O.W.L.s they decided to pass. They were first and second in their year in Defense, a fete given they had only one decent defense teacher their first five years who just happened to be there for their O.W.L. year. George had added to his short list top O.W.L.s in Arithmancy and Ancient Runes. Fred was at or near the top of the class in Transfiguration and Charms. They both knew the other could have done as well in those same courses and they probably could have aced potions, but why bother? Fred was the better spell caster of the two, so he focused on that. George thrived on the more intellectual arts. As for Potions? Why would they want to pass with decent marks? They knew they would do well, but their Mum would then make them take N.E.W.T. level which they already knew and which would mean two more years of useless Snape. It made more sense to them to fail.

Harry knew this about the twins. He knew they would do quite well for themselves in their chosen profession as owners of an innovative joke shop – or at least that was their cover. The reality was jokes could pay the bills so they could work on inventing anything that tickled their fancy. Leaving potions supplies in the twins hands (especially after hearing their ideas about mass production) seemed

logical. Actually, leaving any form of experimental magic to them seemed logical.

"It was my thought they would get priority on the ingredients unless we have a shortage of potions, which according to Remus we do not right now," Harry said. "Anything else?"

"Somehow the Death Eaters had a stock pile of these," Bill said pointing to a large stone in the office. "Interesting that, since they are supposed to be under the exclusive control of the Ministry."

"And what is that stone?" Harry asked.

"It's a very specialized runic anchor," Bill said. "While it's similar to Rune Stones used in wards and such, this one and the others like perform a very different function. Had to learn a little about them when I became a Curse Breaker.

"Basically, stones like these are part of the Ministry's magical detection network. Despite what you may have been told magic is not that easy to detect, at least not at a distance. Stones like these are buried all over the British Isles. They are linked to a control or master stone somewhere in the Ministry. Each of these stones can detect any magic within about a ten mile radius. The stones are actually laid out in a grid with one stone every six miles or so allowing for overlapping coverage. When the stone detects a coherent magical signature, that information is passed to the Ministry Control Stone along with a compass bearing to the source of the disturbance. As the coverage overlap, any magic source should be within the detection range of at least three stones giving the Ministry a very accurate location. It's how they detect unforgivables, illegal portkeys, unlicensed apparitions and unauthorized magic in or near Muggles."

"Not underage magic?" Harry asked. "So that's why there's a trace?"

"The trace is a fiction," Bill said. "It's a story they tell underage witches and wizards to keep them from causing problems. The truth is you only get in trouble for doing magic that might be detected by Muggles, so the true effect of those laws falls almost entirely on Muggle Born and Muggle Raised student. If there was a witch or

wizard present or if it was far from a likely Muggle location, unless the magic itself is illegal, the Ministry ignores it. Otherwise, we'd get a visit from law enforcement every time Mum raised her wand to clean house or Ginny nicked it to hex the twins."

"That hardly seems fair to the Muggle Borns," Harry grumbled.

"It's an efficient way to monitor magic," Bill shrugged. "The other options are to do nothing and hope for the best, which the Ministry won't do, or to investigate all instances of magic, which they refuse to do."

"Okay, so why did the bad guys have these?"

Bill shrugged. "I'd say your guess is as good as mine but I think we can both agree it could not be for good reasons."

"And what can we do with these? As far as I know we have no such detection grid here. No need. Our Muggles know all about magic and dangerous wizards can't get here."

"I was thinking we give them to the twins," Bill said. "They might be able to figure out something."

"Such as?"

"Find a way to locate these for one. If we can locate the stones, we can disable the system meaning the Ministry and whoever is in control of it would be blind to magic."

Harry nodded. "An idea. While I am planning on using Muggle weapons in general, we'll still need to play with wards and such. It would be nice if no one knew we were doing that. But do you think it's possible we could – I don't know – figure a way to compromise their grid?"

"What do you mean?"

"Um... like steal their detection ability and deny it to them?"

"No idea."

"Twins?"

Bill nodded.

"Makes sense. Send them the stuff. Anything else?"

"You know what this is?" Bill asked. He handed Harry a thing that looked like an hourglass.

It did not look exactly like the one he had, but it was similar enough. "I have something like it I think," Harry said. "Time turner?"

Bill raised his eyebrow.

"I have one," Harry said. "It's not an adjustable one. It'll send you back exactly one day. Quite useful. Although I was told that it's heavily regulated in Britain. You need special permission from the Ministry just to use one and you can't own one."

Bill nodded. "I take it the same rules don't apply here?"

Harry shrugged. "As far as I know, I have the only one in the country. It's been in my family for generations."

"Fair bit this one was as well," Bill said, "as were the nine others we confiscated."

"Nine?"

Bill nodded. "What should we do with them, Harry?"

"I can tell you that the one I have is proving very useful. With all I have going on right now, I'd have to sacrifice my training, my education or my responsibilities without one to give me the time I need to do all I've taken up. That," Harry smirked, "and it gives me more time with my ladies. See if the other families might need one, but make sure they understand that it is my understanding that use by pregnant women or young children is strongly discouraged."



Bill nodded.

"And I want to know who has one and any unused ones are to be placed in my vault."

Bill nodded.

"Anything else?"

"As requested from the LeStrange vault," Bill said handing Harry a golden goblet that looked like it had seen better days. "Don't know why it's of interest to you. The goblins say it's a fake. But it was not among the personal items listed in the vault as belonging to any LeStrange."

"What is it?"

"According to Goblin records, it used to belong to a lady named Hepzibah Smith who was supposedly murdered by her House Elf in 1945."

"Murdered?"

"Poisoned," Bill said. "The Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures handled the investigation. When her Will was probated, it described an artifact like this, but that artifact was never found and was believed to have been stolen given how thorough the lady's Will and inventories were."

"What is it?"

"It's said to be a cup that belonged to Helga Hufflepuff whom Ms. Smith claimed as a distant ancestor. That's unlikely as that founder had no children. Hufflepuff did have a gold cup that was said to have certain magical properties, but it has not been seen since her death. At least not until this fake surfaced."

"The real one?"

"Goblin made," Bill shrugged. "The Goblin's recovered it a few generations after the original owner died. They say that's a cheap forgery attributable to a very disreputable wizard who lived in the 1500's. Passed it off as genuine, but it lacks the Goblin smith marks that would be indicative of any authenticity. The Goblins also note it's nothing more than gold plated pewter and might be worth a few Galleons."

"It possibly has another kind of value," Harry said looking at the cup. "So, are we done?"

"There's also the issue of two hundred and seventeen House Elves," Bill began.

"What? You're kidding!"

"Rich pureblood estates," Bill shrugged. "We need to either sell them or you need to take them on."

"Hermione would skin me alive if I sold them," Harry sighed. "Send them over to the Manor to see Darda who's in charge of the staff."

"You do realize these are regular House Elves and not the real Elves you have here," Bill said.

"So were Dobby and Winky," Harry smiled. "The House Elf is a corruption that one of my ancestors figured out how to fix."

"You have work for them?"

"With the new additions to the Manor as well as the other Manors I'm building and the needs of the various families and such, I'm sure I can find plenty for them to do. Please tell me no more surprises? You're not going to tell me about loads more Concubines, are you?"

"No Harry," Bill said. "That's about it regarding the confiscations. There is, however, something else I need to discuss as a friend."

TUESDAY, JULY 30th, 1996 – Parkinson Manor near Nottingham, U.K.

Draco Malfoy had been released from the hospital that morning. The truth was he had little or no memory of the nearly three weeks he had spent in St. Mungo's. The Healers had told him the Goblins had nearly killed him and they had him under severe, potion induces sedation while the other Healing Potions did their job. He had only woken up a few days ago and was incensed to learn he was not allowed any visitors aside from immediate family and no one had been around to see him who might be allowed access. His mother should have been there! She knew her place! But apparently she had forgotten he was head of family. Well, he had thought, she would get a reminder she would never forget.

No one was waiting for him when he was discharged. He was Head of House and no one was waiting. No one bothered to bring him a change of clothes. He stood at the Welcome Witch's station wearing the same clothes he had worn to that travesty of a will reading and while they had probably been laundered, no one bothered to mend them. They were tattered and ripped. He looked poor even by Blood Traitor Weasley standards! He just knew that foul bitch who claimed to be his mother was out spending his money while he lay in hospital and now she was too busy to meet him? She was so going to pay!

A witch on staff walked up to him and handed him a towel.

"What's this?" he asked indignantly.

The witch looked at him like he was nothing. "I would say that if you had ever bothered to read A Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy, it would be obvious," she sneered. The blonde haired bastard had not ingratiated himself to anyone. The staff all believed it had been a mistake not to boot him out the door the moment he awoke. "But as you probably don't read, it's a portkey. Have a good day."

Before Draco could even think of a retort, it activated and he was dragged through magical space to wherever the destination was. He landed roughly in front of a large house. It was much smaller than his home and it would have been beneath his dignity to sully himself with anyone so common if it were not for the fact that this was where his betrothed lived. It had been such a disappointment to learn that his

family had arranged for him to marry so far beneath his station. The Parkinsons barely qualified as Pureblood so far as he was concerned and were too close to being poor for his tastes. But it had been arranged for some reason, even if the reason eluded him and since it was a magical contract between the two families, he was stuck. For Merlin's sake, these people didn't even have the loyalty to their kind to openly support the Dark Lord! Still, being from a much higher station had given him the right to use Pansy as he saw fit. He wanted on the Quidditch team? Father buy's brooms and he gives Pansy to the Captain. Needed a better Potions grade or out of a detention with McGonagall or some such? Snape enjoyed a good young slag as much as the next man. She was in no position to complain as his family was rich and powerful and hers was not. She had to do as he wished! But why the bloody hell was he here and not at home?

He walked up to the house and rang the bell and waited far too long in his estimation for the door to open. He stared down at the forgettable creature with disgust. He never liked House Elves and it shocked him every time he came to this pauper's excuse for a Pureblood home to see the elf well turned out and without noticeable lash marks.

"Mr. Parkinson is expecting you in his study," the elf said.

What self loathing, pathetic excuse for a magical family allowed Elves to address humans in proper English? Even worse, the Elf omitted his title! But before Draco could say anything, the House Elf was gone.

Draco did his best to look imposing as he entered the study. He was, after all, heir to one of the most influential families in Wizarding Britain, if not the most influential. He was the higher class in this meeting as the Parkinsons lacked the Malfoy money, name and clout. The man was expected to be honored by his mere presence and the fact that his family had condoned his betrothal to a girl who was clearly beneath him. He had watched his father play these kinds of people for years. They were expected to cower! They were to feel honored that such lofty mortals recognized them at all! The moment you weakened, the moment all that had been gained could be lost. This man had explaining to do, after all! Who was he to summon a Malfoy?

"Sit down boy!" Thaddeus Parkinson ordered in a commanding tone as Draco entered.

"Excuse me?" Draco said. "I am Head of House Malfoy and expect to be addressed accordingly, not ordered about like some servant!"

"You're head of nothing and an arrogant little shit! SIT DOWN!"

Draco saw a wand aimed at him. He did not have his wand on him. It had been taken when he entered Gringotts for the Will reading and no one had returned it. He complied reluctantly.

"A lot has happened since your moronic decision to cross the Goblins, Malfoy," Thaddeus said. "The bottom line is you're mine now!"

"Excuse me?" Draco said. The fear and power of his name had not worked. It was now time to play social skills, much as he hated that sort of Pureblood posturing.

"You were a bit upset to learn you were not to become Lord Black, weren't you?"

Draco seethed at that, but tried not to let it show. "It was a disappointment," he growled.

"For you," Parkinson responded. "For the rest of us it was an unmitigated disaster, but you've missed that bit. However, disaster for some is an opportunity for others," he added. It was a well known Pureblood political quote.

"Indeed," Draco said hoping there was an opportunity here.

"Let's review what you do know and expand upon your gaping ignorance," Parkinson continued. "Your father was arrested, tried and sentenced to twenty years in Azkaban. He and his name no longer have meaning here."

"The Dark Lord..." Draco began.

"IS CRIPPLED! SHUT YOUR GOB! After you were rendered all but dead – it's a wonder the Goblins didn't kill you, but no matter – a lot happened very quickly. In regards to your former family..."

"My former family? The Blacks?"

"WHICH PART OF SHUT YOUR GOB DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?" Parkinson added a violent spell that passed far too close to Draco's head for comfort.

"Sorry," Draco said meekly.

"Your father's incarceration at the very least means the name Malfoy has no meaning for the time being," Parkinson continued. "Whatever you felt was your right or privilege before because of your name is gone. No one cares about the name Malfoy anymore and no one fears it."

"When my father gets out," Draco began with rage in his voice.

"He'll be killed. It is unwise to invoke the wrath of the Goblins, and your father did just that. He's been declared a thief and there is a death sentence hanging over him. All of that assumes the Dark Lord doesn't kill him for his most recent failures. Should he survive the Dementors and walk out of that place, he'll be dead before the next sun rises. For all practical purposes, he's dead already. His body just hasn't learned that fact yet."

"Surely our world will not tolerate Goblins killing..." Draco began.

"You're mistaken."

"But Professor Binns..."

"Was one of the worst Professors at that school in life," Parkinson continued, "who has not improved through death. Your knowledge of our relations with the Goblins following the Wars of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries is horribly flawed if Binns is your source of information. The Treaties did not divest the Goblin Nations of their right to seek redress from individuals they believed aggrieved them

through theft or fraud. It merely prevents them from unleashing their wrath upon the Wizarding World in general for the transgressions of a few."

"My father never..." Draco began.

"Your family lived in a Manor it did not own, Malfoy," Parkinson said cutting the boy off. "Your Manor is the property of Lord Black."

"Who gave it to my father as part of the Bride Price...?"

"No Draco. The Manor was never part of the Bride Price, except that your father was allowed to lease and occupy it. The Lease was through Gringotts and while Arcturus and Orion Black may have looked the other way when your father and others like him failed to pay their rents, the rents were still owed and the Goblins expected payment eventually on behalf of their client, House Black. Those rents were called minutes after you were dealt with. Thirty-Four families lost almost everything if not everything. And where a tenant was unable to pay the amounts owed after confiscation of their vaults and liquidation of all their other assets, they became thieves in the eyes of the Goblins. And no, Malfoy, the Wizarding World is not about to start a war with the Goblins for the fools like your father. Lord Black intervened on behalf of those who were not proven Death Eaters. But any of those thirty-four family heads who are Death Eaters are under a death sentence. Right now, that list is comprised entirely of your father and the ten others sent to Azkaban with him, but should any of the others be identified as such, they too will be killed."

After a pause, Draco said: "I was told we were worth close to ten million. Surely father did not owe that much!"

"With interest and penalties, your father was indebted to House Black for about four and a half million."

"Then why didn't mother pay it? We could have kept..."

"Your mother's marriage to your father was annulled. She is no longer a Malfoy and owes nothing to the Malfoy line. And, it should be noted, much of your father's wealth came from that marriage. With the

annulment, House Black recovered your mother's Bride Price leaving your House with what was left: about five hundred thousand Galleons in the vaults and the personal property at your former home. Your mother did you at least one favor in not taking what she could have in that regard, but it was still far short of what your father needed to avoid losing everything, including when the time comes or should it come his head."

"But the Malfoys were far wealthier than..."

"Your father squandered much in his various schemes and briberies. Over ninety percent of what he inherited from his father was gone, paid out to bribe Ministry officials and members of the Wizengamot to do or not do what he desired. His legacy to you might well have been poverty even if none of this had occurred. As it stands, you have him to thank for your current circumstances."

"And those are?" Draco began, deflating with each statement.

"You arrive here with the clothes on your back. Your school trunk is here as well. Your trust vault is untouched by this. But that sums up the total value of your estate. You don't even have a seat on the Wizengamot to fall back upon, not that it matters right now."

"But father said..."

"That you had one or could get one from him?" Parkinson laughed. "You're a Malfoy! There was no seat in your future unless you married into it. Your father married your mother in the hopes of maybe becoming Lord Black, but he knew that was a long shot. My daughter is House Malfoy's only realistic shot at a seat."

"But I'm a Pureblood..."

"A meaningless distinction, foolish boy! Seats on the Wizengamot are destined to those with ties to the original lines without regard to blood purity! Your line was not here when the Charter was signed. House Malfoy is a cadet line of what was once a major family in France, not Britain! Your immediate ancestor came here about two hundred years ago during a dark time in his home country. Your Grandfather was



the first of his descendants afforded the privilege of association with the old Houses and his son the first to marry into such a line. Your father's influence and power were only as deep as his wallet. To most proper society, he was still a foreigner, no better than the Scots, Welsh or Irish. But for his marriage to your mother, he still would be considered as little more than that, blood purity notwithstanding!"

"But I was told..."

"Your father deluded himself into thinking he might attain a seat. Had he accepted the truth of the matter, he would have done well to cultivate a strong relationship with his wife for it would be through her family and their auspices he might so aspire. But no. Once you were born, she no longer mattered to him a whit. His treatment of her insured no Malfoy would ever head the Black family. Arcturus Black made sure of that in his Will, one which his Grandson Sirius executed through his own. You were disowned and your mother's marriage terminated by the current Lord Black because that was not just his will, but the will of two of his predecessors. Arcturus Black could not formalize the expulsion of House Malfoy with his Heir Apparent in prison and his only other option – Harry Potter – missing, for the boy had not arrived at Hogwarts when Lord Arcturus Black passed away. Sirius could not do it during his life because he was technically a fugitive. It fell to Harry to fulfill the will of his House. And what did you do to avoid this fate?"

"I don't understand. How could House Black be left to a Half-Blood?"

"You would do well to unlearn what your father obviously taught you, boy! House Potter is one of the oldest lines in our World! They were magical, wealthy and powerful when your ancestors ... all of your ancestors were nothing but Muggle peasants! I have never agreed with House Potter on any matter of significance, but I am also not foolish enough to insult them or cross them! You, on the other hand, who listened to an upstart all your life, have insulted and crossed the Head of the most powerful magical family in the world since the moment you first met him! Add to it your simpering reliance upon power your father never had and you've dug yourself in!

"Whether you believe so or not, your mother did you a favor. She negotiated your betrothal with this family; one which when consummated could well have allowed you to rise above your father's most deluded dreams of grandeur. Your father reluctantly approved, but only after seeing what his first choice for you looked like. My daughter could have helped you at least avoid the rift you caused with House Potter and maybe even help you or one of your descendants eventually attain the title of Lord Black, but in that regards you're even worse than your father, aren't you?"

"Excuse me?"

"You're father ignored his best asset. You ruined yours! My daughter could have been a boon to you, Malfoy. Pity your father never saw the value of a well connected witch otherwise he might have taught you about value! No, instead you whored her out like some common concubine tart and for what? A place on the fucking Quidditch Team? Why? So you could make a fool of yourself? You do know you have less talent at that than anyone else playing, don't you?"

"I..."

"Oh, and you share her with the two trolls. Your father never learned you can't buy friends or influence. You earn them. What he did and what you learned was how to rent, not own and he never learned that once you start down that path, the price for friends and influence always goes up! And just what did you get for her sleeping with that pervert Snape? A better grade? Out of detention? You are an embarrassment to the name of Pureblood just like your loser of a father! You know why he became a Death Eater, don't you?"

"Uh..."

"He became one because otherwise he would have to get a job! The Dark Lord took him because he was a loser and expendable at that. Were it not for his money and connection to House Black, he'd have been killed long ago. And don't think for a minute it was because he was some all powerful wizard! With the exception of your Aunt Bellatrix, who was insane, the Dark Lord only takes the weak! Your father, Bella and ten other Death Eaters couldn't even defeat six kids!

And you were following along in that idiot's footsteps! Mark my words; were it not for your connection to this family, you might be dead already. You certainly would be lucky to have any children at all! And you throw it in our face?

"Pansy could have had you sitting in the Wizengamot in your twenties, maybe sooner. But you ruined that. Whatever clout my family had you ruined. Instead of seeing an influential witch from a good family, they now see a tart who's for sale by her pimp! Well, you're days of being Draco Malfoy ARE OVER! By rights I could kill you now and be done with you, but there's no fun in that!"

Draco paled. "K-k-kill me?"

"Attack on the reputation of an Ancient and Noble House! Your life is MINE! If you bore me, I'll kill you! It's not even a crime, stupid! By sullyng my daughter and only child against my wishes, your life is now mine!"

"I don't have to put up with this!"

"You do if you want to live, Malfoy."

"Pansy promised..."

"What? That she'd never tell me she's a whore and you're her pimp? That you raped her in the Slytherin Common Room Second Year and allowed any who wanted to take turns with her afterwards? She did keep it quiet. She said nothing, right up to the day of the Will reading. When she got back, she spilled everything, begging me to kill you which she knows is the only way she can get out of that damnable marriage contract! My problem is you've ruined her! I'm stuck with you or selling the last of my family as a concubine, because NO ONE WILL MARRY HER!

"Fortunately, your mother was the brains in your house. Included in the contract is a proviso that should you become an orphan, I become your magical guardian and your guardianship will last until you have two sons by my daughter or turn twenty-five! With your father in prison and your mother's marriage annulled, that makes you

and orphan! It's up to you, Draco. You play by my rules in everything, or you won't return to Hogwarts. You know what that means?"

Draco shook his head.

"You have no family and no money. Without N.E.W.T.s, you'd be lucky to get a job tending bar at Three Broomsticks! You want more in life?"

Draco nodded his head.

"First, you swear on your life and magic never to share Pansy with anyone ever again!"

"I need a wand!"

"You truly are an idiot! This kind of magic never requires a wand! SWEAR IT OR DIE!"

"I ... I swear on my life and magic never to share Pansy with anyone ever again."

"You swear you will owe complete fealty to House Parkinson as expressed by me or my daughter in all things."

"But that means..."

"It means if Pansy tells you to do something, you better fucking do it. SWEAR!"

"I sw-swear on my life and magic I will owe fealty to House Parkinson as expressed by you or ... or your daughter in all things."

"Better," Mr. Parkinson said after there was a flash of magic. "Should I decide to send you back to Hogwarts, and I have not decided that, you will not talk to, be friends with or otherwise have anything to do with anyone without Pansy's approval. You will resign as Prefect and from Quidditch. And you will have no contact with Snape! NONE!"

Draco wanted to protest, but knew he could not. He knew his life as Draco Malfoy was over.

TUESDAY, July 30th, 1996 – Gringotts, Pottersport, Charenwell.

"Bill," Harry said, "if you believe your father is of more value here than back there and he'll give up Britain, I'll see it done. But it will take a little time. Aside from Gringotts, all magical travel to and from there is suspended and I won't make exceptions! As for Gringotts, I'd rather not use that route unless there's no other alternative, and there is. You know we will begin an evacuation fairly soon?"

Bill nodded.

"I'll see to it he can be on the first flight here."

"Thank you, Harry."

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 15.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.

3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive Nolan, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle Martin, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura Carlson, age 14 (Hu-3).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 15.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).

3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye Abbott, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison Jones, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille Tinker, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue Brown, age 16 (Gr-5).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria Barnes, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone Fanning, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) Bates, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn Faulken, age 14 (Hu-3).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy Grey, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray Adams, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy Watson, age 14 (Gr-3).

13. Elaine Lucinda Manning, age 14 (Hu-3).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).
2. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).P
3. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).
4. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
5. Ellie Beth Mitchell, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda Timmerman, age 17 (SD-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO: BIRTHDAY SURPRISES.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31st, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry awoke with his two favorite women in his arms. He loved waking up like this. He loved having two witches in his bed holding him in their arms and in their dreams. But if he had to pick a favorite pair it was his Hermione and his Luna. He had loved Hermione forever, it seemed. He and Luna also had a special connection practically from the day they first met and he regretted he had not met her years earlier. These two were his true anchors, something he really needed in this reality. They were his Consorts and the others were all bonus. He knew he could well have lived forever with either of them and just either of them and found peace and happiness in their arms. He was secretly glad he never had to make a choice between them as, while they were very different in many ways, they complimented each other and him as well. Hermione was both the logical side of his brain and his moral conscience. With Luna, he was learning the value of belief and faith. They were the cornerstones of this strange new world and each of the others were also becoming important parts of the structure, but these two were first. Without them, Harry felt, the whole "building" would never have been. He loved whenever it was just the two of them.

Today was his sixteenth birthday and he had already decided it should begin with a lie in. Yesterday had been Duke Work followed by other events. Harry and Neville had agreed to a joint party for their family and friends the night before. Today, it would just be him, these two wonderful women and those that had also become part of his family. Today, he planned to forget the troubles of the world and focus on what he saw as something right and two important parts of that something were snuggled up beside him with content smiles upon their sleeping faces. Through much of his life his nights were plagued by horrible nightmares. Since his first night with Hermione, he had not had a single one. He never remembered sleeping so well, even when he had to get up early.

He lay in bed with his two loves cuddled to each side and had no choice in his mind but to remember the good parts of the day before. His Hermione was pregnant! She was not the first, but in his mind she

was the most important in that regard. Luna was not - not yet. Harry's hope was on Monday Luna would be next. Ginny and Connie were also up there. They had been his friends before any of this happened as well. Harry told Ginny just last night as they danced just how special she was in that regards. Connie was told as well. All of his girls were special, but of his concubines, Ginny and Connie had the added distinction of being his friend first. They knew this was important to him and seemed to be honored that they were both and "almost Hermione" or "almost Luna" or almost both. The biggest problem Harry had was not Voldemort or Dumbledore in some ways; it was dealing with all of his girls. They all deserved everything in a way. The problem was some had earned more. This bothered him even if they did not see it or chose not to see it.

He had spent a fair amount of time yesterday on Duke business. After Gringotts, he went to the site of Jamestown to observe the progress. According to the lead construction foreman, the first residential units were already built. Right now, what prevented people from locating was a lack of services such as groceries and such but they were under construction. There were a few office buildings, several high-rise residential buildings that already looked finished and were at least on the outside. He was told that the town could begin to accept its first residents and businesses as early as two weeks, three at the most.

On his way back to the Manor he also checked on the progress of the new town not a mile from his home. Already the remainder of the main roads were laid out. The three Weasley Manors and guest resort were well underway. The homes for Remus and Neville's parents were not as far along. Several other new homes were under construction as was the town center. The intersection where the road around the lake crossed over itself was now a large, park like roundabout with a very large and very old oak tree in the center. Around this park, shops of various descriptions were already going up. The new manors would be ready by the beginning of September, Harry was told. He could begin bringing in occupants ever earlier. He was told that by August 14th, the town could begin to be occupied although it would not be finished before mid September.

He was not using his time turner yesterday which meant not all of his girls had their time with him. Still, he felt he did well by them. He woke up with Sally-Anne who had been a wonderful bonding the night before. She also proved very eager to make sure her new "husband" was awake and reminded him that now that she had accepted almost everything and was love bonded to him, she wanted her rewards. Sally-Anne had not asked for permission yet. She told Harry she was going to wait a few months like some of the others as the Spring was going to be a very busy time for poor Harry already. After breakfast and before heading to Gringotts for a meeting with Bill, Harry "relaxed" with the "Greengrass" sisters. While to the world all his ladies were Blacks or Potters, he still thought of them by their maiden names and felt it was easier for him to do so. When he got back from his inspection tour and had a nice lunch with his "booty," which was what he called the five witches he acquired through confiscation, he then had the lot of them for afters. He might well have worked through more of his family, but there was the party to consider.

Harry and Neville had agreed on a combined party for their guests. Harry was certain Neville was having a two day party with just his wives down by Neville's lake and was slightly envious. They had wanted to keep it small, but small was now a very relative thing. First, they agreed they had to invite the other Harems. Bill, Fred and George added there now thirty-two wives and seven not yet Love Bound Concubines to the list. Frank and Alice would be accompanied by Frank's other five wives. Remus would be there with six wives, as his girlfriend Stephanie had become his Consort the prior Sunday. Then there was Cissy, Dudley and Clara, Clarice and her family and Harry had to invite his Cousin Samantha and her family. Dora's parents would be there as well along with the families of Harry's Charenwell wives: Fiona, Laura, Rhonda and Karen and Neville's Charenwell wife Miriam. All told it would come to one hundred and forty-four people.

Harry and Neville met their guests in the Conservatory and pointed them in the direction of the Veranda where a reception was in progress. It was in meeting the guests that Harry was brought up to speed on the recent changes in the various Houses. He was rather surprised to learn that of the seventy-five concubines who had arrived in Charenwell, where all but five were also bound; all but seven were

now Love Bonded. Dudley and Clara were also engaged. That was an amusing story as Neville and Lavender had been there as well. Harry knew each family had its own bonding traditions; although it was rather odd to see it as such since the longest traditions dated back to early June at Fred and George's shop in London. Neville took his new girls out for dinner and dancing the very day they bonded, which was how he came to be present when Dudley asked Clara to marry him one day.

Dinner was held in the formal banquet hall, the room that had the portraits of all of Harry's ancestors, or at least all who had held the title of Duke of Charenwell. He saw that the portrait of his parents had changed, or at least the plaque beneath it had changed. Added to the plaque were the names of him and his sister and their dates of birth:

Harry James Potter 31 July 1980

Clarice Lillian (Potter) Jameson 5 September 1981

There were two new portraits on the walls of the Hall. One was of Harry with all of the Potter wives, including Sally-Anne. Somehow the elves had managed to update the portrait in a day. The other was of Harry and all the Black wives. In that one he was named Lord Harry James Potter-Black.

Harry sat at one end of the long banquet table and Neville at the far end. Hermione and Luna sat at on either side of Harry, while Susan sat next to her husband. The remaining one hundred and thirty-nine guests sat on either side of the table. The seating was open, so people sat where they wanted and with whom they wanted which meant a lot of friends were getting reacquainted. To Hermione's left sat Padma and Parvati with Parvati's best friend Lavender there as well. To Luna's right sat the Jameson family. Parvati and Lavender were obviously exchanging notes about their recent experiences while Padma took the opportunity to tell Harry about what she and her sister had learned about Covens.

It was not much. Padma admitted there was very little information in the library about Covens. There was little of value that had been written in Britain or Europe for that matter. The best material they had found in the library were translations from Arabic, Hindi, Chinese and

other eastern cultures and that was what they were using. What Padma could say was that Coven magic was incredibly powerful in some ways. The members of the Coven were likely to see their magical potential increase somewhat to be more compatible with the most powerful among them. The sources also said there could be an across the board increase in magical potential, although Padma doubted that applied to Harry's Girls, given how powerful Harry was. Padma suggested that where a Coven has a very, very powerful member like Harry, the magic of their bonds would raise all the others to be more like him. Her guess was a two hundred point increase on their Gant ratings, maybe more. But the sources also said this increase took time as in several months to be realized. In a Coven where most were at about the same power levels, there still would be an overall increase, just not as dramatic.

She explained that the Coven magic allowed members to learn certain magic in a different way. She explained to Harry that so long as one member of the Coven knew a spell, the others could learn it very quickly. This was also true with wandless magic, silent spell casting and probably animagus training, at least the expressive magic portion of it. Certain magics were not subject to this sharing however. Innate talents such as being a metamorph or a Seer could not be shared. Book magics such as Runes, Potions, Herbology and Arithmancy likewise had to be learned the same old way. So Coven magic enhanced spell casting, but it had other benefits. Wards done by a Coven were said to be scary powerful. Then there was the whole power sharing ability that allowed one member of the Coven to tap into the magical potential of the whole. From a magical combat perspective, this ability could prove crucial. Harry knew many of his girls, if not all of them, would want to be in the thick of any fighting. This new revelation gave him an argument that could keep them safe when the time came, and yet they would be helping him.

Following the very elegant dinner were the presents. Neville received scores of seeds, pods and cuttings of various magical plants. Longbottom House was going to include extensive greenhouses as Herbology was a passion for Neville so it was only fitting that he received gifts for his greenhouse. He was extremely pleased with his gifts, especially when he commented that several of his gifts were plants that were not even in the greenhouses at Hogwarts.

Harry received a different theme of gifts. Dudley had apparently suggested it to Hermione and a few of the others at the luncheon for the Charenwell witches a little over a week ago and everyone pitched in to buy the gifts. Harry received a huge, state of the art television with a DVD player and top of the line sound system. These were relatively new technologies and were probably over priced, but it did not matter as no one person was paying for all of it. In addition to the fancy TV, Harry also received scores of movies. Dudley had recommended many of them, although Hermione and some of the other Muggle Borns also had ideas. Harry wondered when he would have the time to watch movies. Hermione pointed out that either Saturday or Sunday would work. They could have a family movie night, which sounded like a wonderful idea to Harry.

In addition to his new movie collection, Harry also received a photo album. Hermione called it his public album, but did not elaborate. In it were loads of pictures of all of his girls. With Mallory and Minerva, the pictures went back to when they were in school as neither had any from before then. Stacey only had pictures of her since she came to Charenwell, but hoped (as did Mallory) that when her family relocated to Charenwell, she could get others. As for the rest, either their families had helped with pictures or the pictures came when the Elves packed up their belongings. The album had pictures of most of his girls practically from the time they were babies to the present day as well as their families. Even Ginny included pictures of her family stating that there was a time before her Mother "went Dark," a time when she believed her family was indeed happy and she wanted Harry to remember that time and that family, not the one of recent months. The album immediately became one of Harry's most prized possessions.

After the gifts were exchanged and the gathering had their fill of birthday cakes (there were two huge ones), the party moved to the huge Ballroom. Harry liked to think his dancing skills had improved markedly over the summer what with the two formal balls he had already attended and, more recently, his time turning. Two of his three time turning days included dinner and dancing with a few of his witches and he had included a third day as well, usually the day after a bonding. Still, while Hermione was certain Harry was becoming a

wonderful dance partner, events like this meant he was on his feet for hours as he believed it essential to have at least one dance with each of his girls and as the host felt he should also dance with at least some of the guests, which included Cissy, his sister Clarice, his Cousin Samantha, and each of the other Consorts. As tiring as it was, Harry knew it was the best birthday he had ever had.

The party went late into the evening, which was why he was now having a peaceful lie in with Hermione and Luna. Still, today was his real birthday and his girls had managed to completely clear his schedule so he could spend the day with them. He did not know precisely what they had in mind for that day, but he had a very good idea and already had a plan in place if his idea proved correct. If he was correct, this day would be fun for all of them.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31st, 1996 – Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

Kingsley looked around the conference room and had a good idea what this meeting was about. Cornelius Fudge, de jure Minister for Magic was in his usual seat. Seated next to him was Rufus Scrimgeour, Kingsley's former boss and for all intents and purposes the acting Minister for Magic. The transition merely awaited approval from the Wizengamot which all knew was not forthcoming due to the vote problem. Kingsley was there as Head of the Aurors and acting Head of Magical Law Enforcement. Stephan Grim was from the Department for Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures and had been the "temporary" Head of the Concubine Registration office. Hadrian Peneselle was Head of Revenue and Finance. Then there was Dolores Umbridge, who had not specific function. She held the title of Senior Undersecretary for the Minister for Magic, but like many with similar titles, that would not inform anyone of what she did as she basically did what her boss wanted. Umbridge had done Fudge's dirty work for years including, if rumors were true, collecting bribes and extorting money. She had only recently returned from several weeks in Hospital following an unfortunate encounter with a herd of Centaurs. In Kingsley's opinion it was unfortunate that the herd allowed her to live. Percy Weasley was there from International Cooperation. Finally there was a man from the Auction House that apparently kept records on all Concubine sales.

"Right then," Rufus said. While technically not the Minister, everyone knew he was running the show, "status?"

"We have around thirty-two hundred registrations to date, Sir," the representative from Concubine Registration said. "One thousand fifty-seven are from the target age ranges from fourteen to twenty-seven."

"Is that all of them?"

"Most," the man from the Auction house said. "It does not include fifty-two of the First Time Whores from this year's crop. Then again, we know at least fifty were sold to a foreign buyer. Another thirty-three were confiscated from the default Black Tenants. As we know Lord Black is also Lord Potter, it is safe to assume those Whores are no longer in the Country."

"How many of those thirty-three were in the target group?"

"It's impossible to say, Acting Minister. The Seller of the target group did not state and specifics as to the origin of his lots aside from the fact that he legally held title to them due to their Blood Status. All of them could be from the target group or none of them could be."

"And the fifty-two this year?" Umbridge asked.

"I am fairly confident none are part of the target group. The demand as I understand it was for witches sold between September 1988 and May of 1996. The seller seldom ever has done a Private Sale and he had none this year."

"And of those registered, can we identify any of the target group?" Scrimgeour asked.

"No Sir," the Registration Head replied. "The information on the forms is limited to their Birth Name, age, date of birth, current and prior owners and date of initial bonding. The forms did not ask about any prior information such as schools, parents or such."

"Why not? Surely it would have made this process easier?"



The man shrugged. "You asked for them to be registered. You did not express any interest in their prior history and as we know, no one really cares who one of those Whores were before."

"So we have a list of names and where they are, but no idea if any of them will get us out of this mess?"

"That's correct, Sir. Would you want my office to gather information about their pasts?"

Scrimgeour shook his head. "While it might help our immediate problem, the political backlash would be unacceptable. Most of the owners had no desire to discover that information. The Whores are all Muggle Borns or unwanted children or were. It might be seen as an attempt to improve their lot in life."

"They deserve the life they have," Dolores said. "It's a pity we don't sell all the Mudbloods into bondage."

"That would be all too obvious," the man from finance said. "The Muggle Borns would realize something was amiss. They represent over half of our revenue source. Fortunately, they are unaware of their share and, as compared to the Muggles; they are actually paying less in taxes than they would otherwise. To so overtly antagonize them might have a significant and detrimental effect on revenue. Unless you are willing to take a significant cut in pay, I would not recommend any action that threatens our tax base."

"Not that we could do so even if it were desirable," Scrimgeour said. "The Wizengamot is out of business. We are magically prohibited from making law. The job of the Ministry is to enforce the will of the Wizengamot, not usurp it."

"Pity," Umbridge said. "So where does that leave us?"

"We have the lists," Percy said, "we can forward the list to this Charenwell place and let them sort it out. Tell them here they are and tell us who you want."

"They could want the lot of them," Fudge said.

"Don't be an idiot," Scrimgeour shot back. "We know there are only forty-two of these whores that pique their interest. If they ask for more than that, we know they are lying and even the I.C.W. might back us if we refuse to either turn them over or pay the demanded reparations. We can send them the list?"

Percy nodded. "Best channel is probably through Gringotts. I'd recommend that as it is not under I.C.W. control. Were we to send it to the Charenwell Offices in Paris, it might fall into the wrong hands. The Goblins could care less about our little institution. The rest of our world, however...?"

"When can you get the list off?"

"If we have a good copy, today Sir."

"Excellent. Well before the deadline. What's your boss's position on negotiation?"

"He thinks we might be able to negotiate a lesser reparation payment provided we give them the Whores they want. He does not think they will agree to nothing, but a hundred thousand a head is a bit much."

"And just how do we deliver these Whores?" Dolores asked. "They are property! Their owners have rights!"

"Technically they are stolen property," Kingsley said. "We do have laws on the books about that. Their owners have no rights to stolen property and can be prosecuted for trafficking in contraband and stolen goods should they try and make things difficult."

"Still, why should we do this?" Umbridge asked. "The Whores deserve their lot and we are just going to turn them over? They are beasts! Their owners are what they deserve! And besides, we all know many respected members of our society own their own Whores. What would be the reaction if certain of our leaders suddenly found their playthings taken?" Kingsley knew this comment was directed at both Fudge and Scrimgeour who had their own little stables.

"We don't have much of a choice," the man from Finance and Revenue said. "We cannot afford the reparations at the current levels and cannot avoid it! The I.C.W. is backing Charenwell on this and we know the Goblins will not hesitate to empty our government vaults! August 10th! We have until then to solve this problem, otherwise we lost half or more of this year's operating budget!"

"But who says the only solution is to comply?" Dolores said sweetly.

"You have another idea?" Scrimgeour asked.

"Indeed," she replied. "I know this Potter brat quite well. He's a naïve fool, quite gullible. We simply send him what he wants to see."

"Explain."

"Rather than send him the Whores he wants, we send others. Specifically we send a team of Aurors and hit wizards to deal with the brat and his friends. Polyjuice Potion might well do the trick."

"And just how do we send them? No one even knows where this Charenwell place is!"

"It is my understanding you cannot get there by magical means," Kingsley said. "Obviously, this Potter kid must have some other way to transport people. The legend is many from that land travel by mundane means. We must assume he's arranged for transport for these ... Whores. It follows that we will be asked to deliver them to a location for such transport..."

"And instead of the Whores, our assault force disguised as such. Brilliant idea!"

Brilliant indeed, Kingsley thought as he listened to the idiots brainstorm. It might take some doing, but he was certain he could get the titles to the girls once they were identified and they could be summoned to Charenwell just like all the others. The Ministry fools seemed to have forgotten that bit and the man from the Auction House was not volunteering any information. It bothered Kingsley a little. Harry would have to approve the plan, but it would be a blow to

the Ministry and especially the idiots in this room if they actually went forward with it. He might well be condemning several Aurors and Hit Wizards to death crossing the wards, but this was a war and that sort of thing happened. It would be a political disaster for these idiots. He would be meeting with his Duke in a couple of days. By then, they should have the list and be able to counter this foolhardy threat and retrieve the kidnap victims.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31st, 1996 – Riddle Manor, U.K.

"Ah Severus," Voldemort said, "at last. It has been a while."

"My apologies, My Lord," Snape said with a bow. "It would seem that I was unaware how little the Old Man is actually involved with the running of the school."

"Ah yes, Deputy Headmaster Snape," Voldemort chuckled. "I might say congratulations are in order, but you seemed less than thrilled with your elevation."

"I have been buried in paperwork since I accepted the posting," Snape continued. "I am forced to wonder if our Headmaster does anything more than attend the occasional meal."

"Too busy with his pathetic little games?"

"That would seem to be the case."

Voldemort nodded. "And who, pray tell, shall be replacing McGonagall at Transfiguration?"

"I know not, My Lord. Not for certain at any rate. Dumbledore is looking, but has also mentioned that if he is unable to find a replacement, he'll teach the course himself."

"Taking him away from his more annoying extracurricular activities," Voldemort nodded. "That would be most useful at this time. Defense Against the Dark Arts?"

"He has asked me to accept that position, My Lord," Snape replied. "I am reticent to do so."

"Oh? Ah, the curse!"

Snape nodded.

"It does not hold if the position is held by one loyal to me," Voldemort said. "I would advise accepting the offer. It is a far better post to observe new talent than your current position. I need fighters even more than Potions Masters. Assuming you do so, what are the plans for Potions?"

"Dumbledore is seeking Professor Slughorn as we speak, although he is not too hopeful."

"Oh?"

"Dumbledore is certain the man is in hiding now that you have returned."

"Yes," Voldemort nodded. "He was once a man I admired. But he did refuse to join us and I was less than pleased with his reasoning on the matter. But alas, he remained at Hogwarts so I was unable to express my displeasure in the matter in person. As I understand, he retired the summer after my unfortunate incident with the Potters paving the way for a loyal follower to assume his position."

Snape nodded. "He apparently went into hiding again as soon as he heard of your return, My Lord."

"Indeed? I cannot waste my time on him, Severus. I could not before and certainly cannot now. Our losses during my incapacitation must be replaced. That is our first priority! A cowardly Potions Master is of minor concern for now. Besides, when I approached him I was in need of his services both within his expertise and as a spy within Hogwarts School. Both positions are now more than ably filled by you, Severus. The time may come when I can express my displeasure with the man, but he is at most of minor concern. You should tell your Headmaster this. Perhaps knowing I am not seeking him with every

limited resource at my disposal might encourage him to return to the classroom? I consider your taking the Defense position to be of greater importance in the near and long term than any disagreement I might have with that man."

"Yes My Lord."

"But, while this information is most interesting, it is not why I've asked to see you. Tell me: what is the Old Man doing in regards to Potter?"

"Pulling his hair out," Snape replied. "He has made effort to locate all of the boy's closest associates to no avail. The Mudblood Granger and her family have left the country completely. Her parents have placed their home and business up for sale indicating they have no intention of returning. As you are aware, we believe the Mudblood is with Potter."

"Indeed."

"Aside from the idiot Weasley Boy," Severus continued, "all others are officially listed as missing. Again, the Headmaster believes they have left the country and are with Potter, wherever he might be. The Headmaster thought of using the boy as bait to lure Potter back, but has concluded that Potter has written the Weasley boy off."

"So a hostage is not an option?"

"Even his Muggle relatives are gone, Sir. It is doubtful there is anyone whose peril might entice the boy into acting the idiot. The best option was Black who was killed at the Ministry. The Werewolf might be another, but he too is missing. Dumbledore is beside himself. Then again, this is one time he's not in control of things."

"So Potter is out of the country?" Voldemort asked. "From Pius I am aware that is the Ministry's opinion."

"One of the members of the Order has a rather unique object," Snape nodded. "It indicates to some extent the location and condition of any person she considers of interest. Potter is one such person and her device reports he is lost."

"As in dead?"

"As in somewhere unknown," Snape said. "Dumbledore seems to know more about this Charenwell place than he lets on. My impression is that if Potter is there, neither we nor Dumbledore can get to him."

"A minor concern, I'm afraid," Voldemort replied. "Again our current circumstances preclude any concerted effort to get to the boy unless he is fool enough to come knocking."

"But the prophecy!"

"I may have misjudged its significance," Voldemort replied. "My former demise may well have been as you say Dumbledore believes: an accident of nature caused by that Mudblood's pathetic love. That is no indication the boy is of any concern."

"And the duel?"

"Mr. Olivander has been most kind and generous with information, after a little persuasion. It would seem my wand and the boy's wand are made from the same core materials from the same exact creature. The boy could be little better than a squib and I could not defeat him. Brother wands cancel each other out or some such. Then again, the same limitation holds for him. Even if he has some power that could defeat me, his wand would prevent any such thing from occurring."

"So the prophecy...?"

"You are as aware as I that we do not know the entire prophecy. I fear I might have acted too hastily in the matter fifteen years ago, but it was based upon the information I had at the time and the advice from supporters who claimed to be knowledgeable about such things. I never studied the particulars of Divination, finding it to be generally far too imprecise to be of any true utility. Were it not for Rookwood saying that the Prophecy was deemed of interest by his colleagues at the Department of Mysteries, I might not have given it another thought."

"But...?"

"We made many assumptions on little information, Severus. We assumed that the Dark Lord in question was me. Assuming that it was something more than the muttering of a known fall down drunk, it should be remembered that only my followers and supporters use that term in regards to me. Remember your history, Severus. The last wizard to be generally referred to as a Dark Lord by the population at large was Grindelwald. For me, it was You-Know-Who and other such rubbish.

"We assumed that what we heard meant my supposed nemesis would be born at the end of July, but could it not have meant something else? Did it mean born? Did it even mean 1980? Assuming it is real at all, it could just have easily have meant a foreign mercenary arriving on our shores, could it not? Now I am forced to wonder. Still, we did move to exterminate the two likely candidates: Potter and Longbottom."

"And failed," Severus added.

"Indeed," Voldemort replied. "I made a strategic error back then banking on fear being able to overcome the relative lack of intelligence and skill within my forces. That mistake cost us then and has cost us heavily in recent weeks. It would seem our typical Operations personnel are not nearly as effective against an adversary that does not soil themselves at the sight of them. We need to be mindful of that going forward."

"Yes My Lord."

"I fear we had grown far too over confident in our ability to make the others cower in terror. We were on the cusp of taking over when that Prophecy fell into our laps. I am forced to wonder whether you were intended to hear what you did."

"My Lord?"



"Fear not, Severus. We both know there are few depths of depravity the so called Leader of the Light will not plumb. There is as much blood on his hands as any of ours; he just chooses a different means of accomplishing his more violent goals. Rather than stand and fight, he goads his enemies into traps within traps and throws away his own when it suits him. His disdain for actually killing is the ultimate in hypocrisy and hubris and will be his undoing in the end, most likely. Considering what transpired after you heard that so called Prophecy, I must now at least consider the possibility it was planted to goad us into acting rashly. I am disappointed to admit, the Old Fool succeeded if that was his intention."

"So Potter's not...?"

"He is still a symbol for the pathetic masses! In that regard he is a threat."

"So what is it you intend?"

"If he's truly left, we leave things be," Voldemort said. "True, I would enjoy placing his head on a pike in the Ministry Atrium, but that can wait. The more important thing is he ran off like a coward. The Great Hero is gone. Who will stand up to me knowing there is no great Savior to help them? It is not an ideal situation, but the primary threat that boy posed was as a symbol. The ignorant masses believed he would defeat me! They resisted to the extent they have thus far because they believe the Boy will save them. Well now it appears no such thing is in the offing. I would prefer him dead, but gone works just as well for our purposes. We can now focus our efforts on reconstituting our forces and moving towards our rightful place as the ruling class."

"And if he were to return?"

"Do you believe he will, Severus?"

"No. The boy's a coward in my opinion. It got a little too real for him and he's shot of us."

"We are in agreement. We will, of course, deal with him in time. But he's of no immediate concern."

WEDNESDAY, JULY 31st, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry had made a promise to himself that at least for today, his birthday, he would refrain from thinking about the multitude of things he was now seemingly in charge of. He would forget about the war, the evacuation, the Muggle Government, the various construction projects. All that mattered today was his family and deep down he doubted he would ever have another Birthday with just him and his girls. No, he knew that would never happen. This time next year he would probably be up to his neck in children and nappies. He chuckled to himself at the thought and this apparently woke the two angels snuggled into either side of him.

"What's so funny, Harry Love?" Hermione asked softly.

"Just thinking," he replied.

"Oh?" Luna said. "I do hope they are wickedly dirty thoughts!"

"Erm...not really," Harry said.

"Oh poo!" Luna giggled. "And here I hoped you were planning on using your Time Turner today so we could all get a good Harry Time."

"Several good Harry times," Hermione purred. "You did think of that, didn't you?"

"I did."

"Oh goodie!" Luna all but squealed. "Hermione and I so want to do two of you at once!"

"You – you do?"

"Mm-Hmm," Hermione said. "You get all the fun three ways. This way would be our fun."

"Another one of your fantasies?"

"Not until recently," Hermione giggled. "Never wanted two boys at once. But this isn't two boys, is it? It's just doing you twice at the same time. That sounded like fun when Dora mentioned it. She and Mallory did do that before and found it ... interesting."

"I...well, I was going to just divide you up. Divide and conquer you know?"

"Oh that's no fun," Luna said.

"I just thought watching me shag might creep me out a bit."

"I'm sure you won't mind once it starts, Love," Hermione said. "Please?"

"You won't regret it love," Luna said. "A few of us want to try something new, just to see if we like it. But we all agree no new sex unless we get double ended."

"Excuse me?"

"Your cock in both ends, silly," Hermione said. "We suck you while you fuck us."

"Really?"

"It really sounds like great fun!" Luna said.

"I ... I guess."

"Besides, Harry, we both know this might be your only real birthday orgy. Next year there'll be babies to consider and we want you well and truly shagged out."

"And us as well," Hermione added. "I think five of you should do nicely."

"F-five?"

"I figure five of you could easily do all of us five or six times at least without really pushing your limits."

"Meaning more of you for those you take to bed tonight," Luna added.

"I – I guess," Harry said as Luna straddled his body lowering herself onto him.

"I so love waking you up," she said just before she began.

Harry sat on the Bonding Couch naked and blindfolded. His girls had promised him a couple of special presents. The first had been when he arrived in the Library. Hermione and Luna sat him at their bonding spot and handed him a photo album. This was his private album, one that was charmed so that only he and his girls could see the pictures, he was told. He opened it. There on the first page was a picture of Astoria; a very naked, very sexy picture of Astoria. There were six pages of naked Astoria, including at least three pictures where she was obviously pleasuring herself. And, as these were magical pictures, they moved. Astoria's pictures were followed by Connie, also naked although not in the same poses.

"All of us," Hermione said. "Alphabetical order by first name. Six pages each for now."

"Just us for now," Luna added. "We'll add several girl sex photos later."

"We know how you like watching," Hermione added.

"For now?"

"Oh yes," Hermione said. "We intend to update it."

"With – with what?"

"Every few months or so," Luna said. "That way you can see some of us get our boobies and such and others of us with our baby bellies, or both."

"Why do I need...?"

"Don't you like it?" Hermione asked with a pout.

"Sure he does," Luna said. Harry's opinion of the book was hard to miss. It was even harder to miss as all his girls took off their robes and gathered around him. It was then when Hermione and Luna blindfolded him. He chuckled as those two had very active and kinky imaginations and he still wondered what this new sex was going to be about.

Although getting a blow job while blindfolded was not as kinky as he expected. He was expecting something like maybe a game. He was expecting to be asked to guess who it was who was taking care of his opinion about their book. He only knew who it was not, as Hermione and Luna were still sitting on either side of him taking turns kissing him. Whoever it was between his legs was enthusiastic, Harry would give her that much. Then again, they all were. He had no idea. He reached his point of no return where he could not stop even if he wanted to. It was then that the blindfold was removed, although he did not take advantage to see who it was, rather he kept his eyes closed as his climax built and he released into the mystery mouth, which did not stop. None of them did. The woman climbed into his lap after a few minutes and began kissing him tenderly. When she finally broke the long kiss, Harry was ready for more and felt her shifting. He always loved the feeling of entering one of his girls. She was slowly moving up and down, kissing him in between her moans of pleasure. It was only now that he bothered to open his eyes.

"Cissy?" he asked in shock. She could only smile and nod in reply.

"What the..." he began, although he made no effort to stop her.

"We give her to you," Hermione said in his ear, just as she gives herself to you."

"Why?" was all Harry could manage.

"She asked us," Luna said. "She's thirty-three and has never been truly loved by a man before, Harry. She wants that. She knows you can give that to her. She knows because for three weeks she has seen you give that to us."

"In our society, it is unlikely she'll find a decent husband, Harry," Hermione said. "Divorce and Annulment are exceedingly rare. You must understand how much she hated her life when she asked for her Annulment. She was giving up any realistic hope for marriage. Wizards can get around the stigma of a failed marriage through Concubines. Witches have no such outlet. The best she could hope for is as a Mistress with no prospects, no guarantees, and no family."

"A Mistress is usually disowned," Luna added. "Certainly if she's from a wealthy family."

"How's this helping?" Harry gasped as he could not help but watch Cissy biting her lip as her pleasure began to build along with his own.

"We're your Consorts," Hermione said. "We gave her to you as a gift and she gives herself to you of her own free will."

"As such," Padma said, "when you two finish, she can Love Bond and become one with the Coven."

"A Concubine?" Harry stuttered.

"No," Padma said. "Nor a Consort or Wife At Law. This Bond is not well known in Britain, but is known in India. When there is a healthy Coven, the Bond can form with any witch invited in without a pre-existing basis such as Consort, Concubine or Wife. Basically, The Consorts have to allow it and the rest of us, along with the Consorts, must approve the match, as it were, and we do."

"Oh MERLIN!" Cissy moaned as she reached her peak.

"Finish her, Harry," Hermione whispered. "Show her the meaning of multiple orgasms!"

Harry needed to finish, but it was also clear that Cissy was not in any condition to finish him. He shifted them around so that she was lying on her back and kissed her hard as he took over the act. A few minutes later, they both reached their peak. It was several minutes before Cissy could think straight. She then placed her hand over his heart and spoke the oath of the Love Bond. With nineteen witches who would flay him alive if he did otherwise, Harry accepted the oath and there was a flash of magic, followed by applause from the witnesses.

"Thank you, Harry," she whispered. "You have no idea what this means to me."

"Um, you're welcome?"

"I can have a life again!"

"Um, okay," he replied then turned to Hermione. "And how does this work? She's neither Consort nor Concubine. What is she then?"

"There is no word in English for her," Padma said. "She is neither and both and bound to you as surely as we are. And, as her Bond is through the Coven, then she is bound to the rest of us as well."

"What's that mean?"

"Well," Cissy said softly, "in addition to all the benefits of the Coven that we all now share, it also means I am now with all of you. I never knew true physical intimacy with another before, now I'll probably have more than I ever dreamt possible. Although it does mean I'll probably wind up in bed with all of the others."

"Children?" Harry asked.

"Unavoidable," Hermione said. "The Coven drives us to procreate even more surely than the Consort Bond."

"Family? Inheritance? You do know your niece is in this Coven?"

"I am and will remain a Black," Cissy said. "But as I understand it, I am not bound to any one House. You'll have twelve Potters, twelve in House Black, and me. I'm bound to all now."

"No cross-bonding?"

"It might not even be necessary for the others," Hermione said. "We don't know when we became a Coven. It might never have been necessary once the first Love Bonds were taken. We don't know."

"But cross-bondings are fun," Luna added, "so we think we should keep it for the others."

"As for Inheritance," Cissy said, "I have my Bride Price back. It's fairly substantial so you shouldn't worry about that. And as for Dora, you do know you have two pairs of sisters, don't you?"

"I always wondered about that," Harry said. "Isn't that incest or something?"

"Girl sex is not incest," Hermione said. "It's a magical necessity. In the Muggle World masturbation is also frowned upon, but for developing witches sexual release is a necessity. I was quite okay doing myself, but I have found the intimacy is much more ... satisfying."

"I won't say girl sex is common among sisters," Cissy said. "I was years younger than my sisters, although Andy did help me before she was disowned. I would never have done that with Bellatrix."

"Like at school," Daphne said, "there needs to be a comfort level between the partners. It's not like love or lust, but you must trust the girl and at least like her as a friend. Unless you swing that way by nature, of course."

"And we don't," Astoria said. "None of us do. It may satisfy our magical needs and be enjoyable, but we all need a man."

"And we have one hell of a man," Stacey added. "So, are we all going to get man sexed until we can't think straight today?"



"I'd say so," Harry chuckled as he saw four later versions of him entering the Library.

Harry found that having other versions of him around and shagging was a little creepy at first, although apparently the girls were really enjoying it. Four Harrys would take two of the girls while one took two others. The Harrys would rotate their positions after each set of girls and they were done. Once every girl had been with two Harrys, Harry (version one) divided his girls into five groups of four for the remainder of their day (he, of course, would relive this day four more times before his Birthday was over).

Harry (version one)'s group included Cissy, Daphne, Astoria and Dora. He should have known better than to keep all the Slytherins (and Blacks) together. They did their best to wear him out and he had four more days of this! Then two of them wanted to do something different or at least try it. He learned that Dora had come to enjoy having a man in her bum and Daphne wanted to try it as well. He also learned that at least one girl in each group was going to give it a go as well. Harry (version two) was with Mallory, Luna, Hermione and Connie and Mallory and Luna were going to try it. Harry (version three) had Padma, Parvati, Laura and Stacey and Parvati was willing. Harry (version four) had Katie, Ginny, Karen and Sally-Anne, with Karen wanting a go. Finally, Harry (version five) had Tabatha, Fiona, Rhonda and Minerva with Fiona and Rhonda wanting a shot. Some had been forced to do that before and as they had not enjoyed the regular sex before, but enjoyed it immensely now wondered if it was related. Others were just curious. Harry wasn't sure what he thought of it aside from the fact it was very different. Still, while some would probably not ask for a repeat, some would and none of them blamed him for anything. What he was sure of is that there would be twenty very satisfied witches at breakfast on Thursday.

Harry (version one) spent that night with Cissy, who proved to be even more eager than he could have imagined. She did explain as she strove to wear him out that she had at least seventeen years of frustration now demanding relief. She finally gave him a break around three in the morning. It was a good thing, he thought, that at least he could have a lie in before he turned time and joined the party again.

Poor Cissy would have to get up early just like every other day as to her it was now and would remain Thursday and she was needed for her services of a non-naked or intimate variety as his Executive Secretary.

He lay awake thinking about this turn of events. A month ago, he would have said no, absolutely not. He probably would not have allowed Hermione and Luna to trick him like they did, maybe. But he knew it was now beyond his ability to control. The girls, including Cissy, wanted this and he could no longer say no to their wants.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).

10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (4/23/63) (SI-5); Coven Bonded 7/31/96.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline Hendricks, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura Carlson, age 14 (Hu-3).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).

7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) Bates, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn Faulken, age 14 (Hu-3).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy Watson, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda Manning, age 14 (Hu-3).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (9/17/71); CONSORT (7/27/96).
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE: DRUM BEATS

FRIDAY, AUGUST 2nd, 1996 – Gringotts Bank, London, U.K.

Arthur Weasley was escorted into a small "transient" office. It lacked the fancy furnishings, personal items or anything that would indicate someone worked here because no one really did. Each Gringotts branch had at least a few offices like this for employees visiting on business from other branches or, like now, for other reasons deemed acceptable by the local Goblin Clan. This meeting had little to do with the day-to-day business of the bank, but the relations between the bank and a certain country and its largest client was always of importance. For Arthur, it was the first time he had been anywhere in the bank other than the main floor where the tellers were located and the conference room where Sirius's Will had been read.

The door opened and Arthur immediately recognized the tall man with red hair. "Bill?"

"Hello Dad," Bill Weasley replied.

"I wasn't told..."

"You were only told enough to get you here," Bill said. "We don't know whether or if you are under anyone's surveillance and cannot take too many unnecessary chances."

"I don't understand."

"You wrote to me about coming to live wherever I was, or Fred or George, yes?"

"I did. There's the situation with your mother. I filed for divorce a couple of days ago. I'm leaving her the Burrow and two thirds of the contents of my Vault, as little as that is in order to make a clean break."

"And your job?"

"What's the point? They still are baiting Muggles and the government is less inclined to take any action than before."

"The Order?"

"Has cost me a wife, my daughter and any way you look at it two sons. It cost me the only thing that ever mattered to me, my family. There's nothing here for me now and I just want to find a place to make a new start, assuming that's even possible."

"It might be," Bill said. "I am fairly well connected with the government where I'm living."

"Yes," Arthur nodded, "I heard that Fleur's father has recently become the French Minister for Magic."

"Except we are not living in France," Bill said watching his father become confused. "True, the fact that my Consort is the eldest child of a foreign Head of State might be beneficial to my new home's Foreign Ministry. Then again, the countries have a point of mutual concern."

"That being?"

"Despite what you might read in the Daily Prophet, most of the Magical World views Magical Britain as a major problem."

"You-Know-Who," Arthur agreed.

"Is but part of the problem," Bill said. "It goes so far beyond that, Dad. If You-Know-Who and his Death Eaters were to drop dead en masse today, Britain would still be in hot water with the international community. The problems date back seventy years or longer. The root cause of the problems arose long before the International Statute of Secrecy. But I'm not here to discuss politics. You want out, right?"

"I think so," Arthur said.

"Dad, due to security concerns, I can't discuss possibilities."

"I want my family back, but that's not going to happen," Arthur said. "I haven't spoken to Percy in a year and don't see it happening. Your Mum and I are through. I have no idea where Ron is in all of this except he knew and said nothing to me. You, Ginny, Charlie and the Twins are the only ones left and you're the only one I can contact. Dumbledore's watching Charlie now that I've cut ties with the Order and will have nothing to do with the so called Leader of the Light. I have no contact with any other Order members either, although I'm pretty sure I'm not the only one who's lost trust with the man. You're out of the Country and the only family I have left that is not either being watched – as far as I know – or still with the bastard."

"Actually, I can tell you that Fred, George and Ginny all live nearby my place; within a few miles at any rate."

"You've ... you've seen them?"

"At least a couple of times a week," Bill smiled.

"But Ginny's a ...?"

"A what?"

Arthur could not answer.

"Where we live, by taking a Concubine, the man is expected to allow the witch to become his wife," Bill said.

"But isn't Harry already...?"

"Ginny became his seventh wife, I believe."

"Seven?" Arthur asked in shock.

"He currently has at least nineteen with at least five potential ones."

"Merlin's Beard!"



"He's not alone," Bill said. "Including Fleur, I have twelve wives, two probable wives and two potential wives. Fred and George have eleven each, with a possible total of sixteen."

"How did this happen?"

"Long story and not important at this juncture unless you need the explanation."

"It can wait. But you will explain this."

"We will Dad, and I can assure you it will make some kind of sense."

Arthur nodded. "Is Ginny okay?"

"She might argue what Mum did was the best thing that ever happened to her."

"Becoming part of a Harem...?"

"She's very happy about her new life, Dad."

"Are you sure?" Arthur asked in disbelief. "That bond does not actually allow for honesty."

"So you're led to believe," Bill said. "Despite the number of Concubines in Britain, we've learned you lot know little or nothing about the Bond and what it can mean. I can assure you, Ginny is quite happy."

"Is Harry really..."

Bill nodded. "In some ways, mostly due to his family wealth and properties, he's more – er – powerful than the Ministry."

"Will I get to see her?" Arthur said in a hopeful voice.

"Not here," Bill said. "I seriously doubt she'll return to Britain anytime in the foreseeable future."

"I meant if I moved there."

"Ah! Yes I gathered that was what your letter was on about. There are a few things you need to know about 'There.' First of all, once you go there, for all practical purposes there's no coming back. Travel to and from there is extremely restricted even for its citizens these days. For one such as you, a foreigner, you need permission from its ruler. Travel by apparition or portkey is impossible. There was a floo connection, but it has been shut down or will be, and even then it's impossible for a non-resident to access."

"Then how did you get here?"

"Gringotts has its own international floo system between its various branches. As an employee, I can use it. You do know, of course, we technically are not in Britain here?"

Arthur nodded.

"How did Harry travel to the Will reading?"

"He's allied with the Goblin nation and is their largest account by far. Despite what you may have learned, the Goblins are not truly anti-wizard in all things. Most of the difficulties are with the idiots in your country. Harry can access their floo for activities they deem as beneficial to his financial empire. He cannot, however, use it to go on Holiday or something."

"So if I can't use magic, how would I get there?"

"By other means. You do realize if you agree to this, you must leave everything behind? There is no coming back?"

Arthur nodded.

"Right then. First thing you should know, this Country I live in now takes its security precautions very seriously. I can't tell you when you are leaving except it will be soon; probably within the next two weeks. Second of all, you will be advised by letter of your departure time. That is non-negotiable. You will need to travel from wherever you are

to the departure point by Muggle means. That means you need to look like a real Muggle and not a wizard playing at it and you'll need to convert your money into Muggle money. Gringotts can do that for you.

"You need to learn the Muggle transit system. Harry recommended and I agree that from now on, you should suspend use of magical transport and learn the London Underground. If you're not staying in London, change your living arrangements. Your departure point will be from London City Airport. You can get there using the Underground, but Hermione says you can't get there from Leicester Square (which is the closest station to the Ministry and Diagon Alley) without changing trains. So learn how to get there! Your departure documents will tell you precisely how where to go to catch your flight. Don't miss it!"

"Flight?"

"Right now, for all practical purposes the only way to get to Charenwell is by Muggle means and in particular by airplane."

"Do you think they might tell me how they stay up?"

"Probably not," Bill said. "But I'm sure there are people where you are going who'd be more than happy to. So, you want to do this?"

"Where would I live? What would I do?"

"I am not at liberty to say right now. I'm not sure the Duke has decided as he's not about to make promises he cannot keep. Rest assured, you will have a nice place to stay and a choice of jobs once you're settled in. Well?"

"You folks are the only ones I still trust, Bill. Let them know I want to go be with you."

Bill nodded. "Once you get the letter, leave immediately."

"My job?"

"It might be a good idea if you quit. If not, just leave."

"Okay. Tell them I'll come."

"Another thing, and I hope this bit is unnecessary, if you're under the Imperious Curse, a Compulsion Charm or following anyone's orders that make you a threat to Charenwell, its Duke or any of its people or if that is your true intention, you will not survive the journey."

"Is that necessary?"

"It's been that way for over a thousand years, Dad. And given the times as they are now here, what do you think?"

"I still want this," Arthur said after a slight pause.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3rd, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

For the last several weeks, and in particular the last two, Harry had gotten used to waking early. In the beginning it was because there seemed to be so much that needed to be done. More recently it was because there was flight training on Monday's through Friday's (excepting the two days this past week set aside because of Neville and his sixteenth Birthdays). Even if he did not have to get up, Hermione and Luna did, which meant everybody did. Two of his three Tine Turned mornings he was up at or before six and sometimes all three if any of this third night bed partners were due at the Air Field that morning as was often the case it seemed. His ability to lie in was limited to the morning after a bonding or Sunday's usually, and he still woke up at about the same time. He did not mind. It gave him an hour or two to just think as he held a pretty young, and sleeping (and he liked to think content) woman in his arms.

His last night had followed yet another bonding. He was as nervous about this one as he had been about Tabatha if not more so. It turned out one of Tabatha's friends from school was already part of his family. Harry liked to think that the reason things went well that day and night with Tabatha was because her friend Stacey was there to tell her things would be okay. The witches who had already been Concubines before were less nerve racking for him as they could

understand that this was going to be a much better life. As Ginny, Daphne and Astoria proved that growing up a witch in the magical world seemed to make it easier because this life was obviously much better than what they had been led to believe. The "inexperienced" Muggle Borns had always concerned him because this experience would shatter any notions they might have had about magic being wonderful, he felt. Again, it seemed that having a friend already in the new family made the transition easier. He knew that Hermione was already working with Parvati and Padma on determining the effects of Coven based or enhanced Bonds and Hermione was now theorizing it aided things for the new girls. Still, Harry was not certain.

Yesterday was the first time he had to bond with a new witch who neither knew about Concubines before that day nor had a friend around to be there for her. The girl's name was Kathryn O'Fallon. She was sixteen, with dark hair and deep blue eyes from Waterford Ireland and had finished her Fifth Year at St. Patrick's School in Ireland. She knew no one here when she arrived. Almost all of the girls bought at the Auction knew someone, if only their former Professor Minerva. "Kate" did not even know her and, as Harry feared, he had to rely on the basic Concubine Bond more than he wanted to ... at first. The others had all seemed ready and even willing when the time came. Kate was merely compliant, at least until she completed the initial bond. Then it got better for her and by extension Harry. By the time they fell asleep together, she was Love Bonded to him and he was also pretty sure she had been more eager than prudent, just as all the others had been their first day with him.

Kate had arrived along with five other young women. The others were all Hogwarts students and were now generally too young for Harry's flight training. He was reaching the end of the list of girls acquired at the Auction. Neville had received Natalie McDonald, an attractive, fourteen year old Gryffindor who was in Astoria's year. In fact, aside from George, whose new witch was a thirteen year old named Gryffindor Michelle Graham and Kate, all the girls were just out of Fourth Year. Bill's was named Francine Broadmoor from Ravenclaw and Fred had a pair of identical twins named Patsy and Mary Tennyson, also from Ravenclaw.

By this time next week, it would almost be over. Fred would have one more bonding on Monday. Bill and George would be done after Wednesday. Harry had learned that two of the four girls he had remaining on his list were spending the summer together, so he would be done with this by Friday. After next Friday, only Neville's house would still have more witches enroute and those were the three they had acquired from Slytherin. Harry was still concerned about the remaining Charenwell witches. There were twenty-six of them out there and it was his intention to bring them home just as he had – accidentally – brought home sixteen others. He knew they needed to be bonded, but there was no way he would accept another into his house. Twenty-five women were enough. He figured he could get help from Remus and Frank maybe. Maybe the Weasleys would take in a handful more as well. But he would have preferred a different situation, one with more wizards involved.

He was hampered by an old law that he was not about to ask his legislature to repeal. Long ago, an ancestor of his had barred the Concubine trade within Charenwell. It was not needed, in his opinion, because the social conditions that sustained it in Britain (and still much of Europe at that time) did not exist in Charenwell. There was no "glut" of young witches needed to either justify or sustain the trade and to allow it to continue would effectively create a class of men without families. Thus, the trade was banned and with the exception of the Duke, no Charenwell born could be sold into slavery nor could any own or acquire Concubines. The sole reason for the exception was the need to preserve the ducal line to prevent any usurpation of rule from Britain. Every wizard who now had a Harem or a Coven had been born outside of Charenwell, which meant they were within a loophole in the law that would allow them Concubines. They were still bound by other laws that prevented the trade within Charenwell itself. They were prohibited from acquiring "new" Concubines from within the country and from selling the ones they had – ever. The Charenwell witches who were also fell within a loophole as they were not initially bound in Charenwell. True, their fate was based upon a usurpation and violation of their rights, but the bond was formed and once formed could only be transferred unless allowed to mature, which was an equally permanent condition.

The travel restrictions made it all but impossible for Charenwell wizards other than the Duke to relocate Concubines to their homes. This, Harry had read, did not mean that there were no such Concubines, only that they had to be maintained abroad or the wizard had to seek leave from the Duke to import them. The domestic laws required any imported Concubine to be allowed the opportunity to form the mature bond with their wizard. It did not mandate such maturation, but removed most any incentive for wizards to treat their Concubines the way they were routinely treated in Britain. "Whoring Out" was against Charenwell law, at least for any Concubines brought into Charenwell. (What a Wizard did with witches who never were brought in was deemed a matter for the relevant local authorities.) Working without pay as a laborer or domestic was also against the law. (Where all witches were either Love Bonded or performed household duties in roughly equal degrees, they were not considered Domestic Servants. It was where one or more became exempt from such duties that the others were then deemed as servants and had a right to a "reasonable" wage.) This latter law applied to all family members. What little trade remaining in Charenwell after the Acts Regarding Rights of 1223 was a result of violations of the law. A wizard who violated the law had his Concubines seized and transferred to a trustworthy wizard who would abide by the laws.

When all of this started, Harry had considered waiting until the evacuation of Muggle Borns and others displaced by the Troubles provided a large number of wizards who fell within the birthplace loophole, thereby avoiding the large Harems. The problem was as Duke he had to see to the welfare of all these women and the government would need a whole new Department to keep track of them and make sure the laws were followed. It was much easier with fewer, as Harry could see to that role himself. It helped that he trusted those he had chosen to help him. Still, while the Auction witches were all here or would be quite soon, there were others out there who might be arriving and he had to see to their welfare as well.

The purpose of the Charenwell laws regarding Concubines was their welfare. It gave rise to laws against abuse of any sentient magical or human and encouraged one of Harry's ancestors to discover the dark curse placed upon the Elves and ultimately find the way to end the

curse. What surprised Harry was learning that the laws were basically a restatement of then existing English magical laws, although with some modifications. Those laws dated back to the days of the Founders and in particular to the writings of none other than Salazar Slytherin. He wrote a now lost work on the subject of magical bonds and apparently argued both for their use and for laws preventing their abuse. He believed strongly that all magicals must be bound to another to preserve what he called "civilized magic." With the disparity between witches and wizards, it was either that or allow the witches to marry Muggles, losing their magic to the mundane world and possibly allowing "wild magic" to gain ground. Wild magic was self taught or uncontrolled magic which he believed was a threat to their world both because of the lack of education and the stagnation of magical development. Slytherin had gone so far as to suggest that magical children as young as a year old should be adopted into the magical world and kept and raised there without regard to the status of their parents.

This revelation, courtesy of House Black and Potter Journals from the time period, flew in the face of all they had been taught. Slytherin was not opposed to Muggle Borns at all! He merely wanted them removed from the Muggle World and raised amongst their own kind! His laws and the Journals suggested he was opposed to what were now known as Purebloods, going so far as to suggest that no magical line should go more than two generations without marrying or bonding with a Muggle Born. Muggle Born wizards were to be wed to "old line" witches to "flush the magical impurities that accumulate over the generations." The same was true for Muggle Born witches. Under true Slytherin Philosophy, Hermione would not be coveted as a slave for a Pureblood wizard, but as a primary wife with Purebloods such as Ginny being married off to Muggle Born wizards or sold as concubines as they were considered less desirable!

With the research they had done thus far for their various projects, Harry and the others had concluded that basically all the history they had been taught at Hogwarts was nothing more than Pureblood propaganda. Upon reading both the Black and Potter Journals about the Founders and in particular about Salazar Slytherin, *Hogwarts: A History* and *A History of Magic*, Books Hermione once considered as gospel, were moved to the humor shelves less someone believe they



might be truthful. Slytherin was not a Pureblood as was commonly believed, but Half-Blood on his father's side and Muggle Born on his mothers. He had not left Hogwarts because he believed Muggle Borns should not learn magic, the opposite was true. He felt children from old magical lines could be trained as had been the practice as apprentices. In his view, Hogwarts was primarily for Muggle Borns as they lacked the family connections to become an apprentice. He left because his wife died and the shame of his son becoming a Necromancer. Necromancy was one branch of magic that almost all magical cultures saw as purely evil. It required desecration of the dead or human sacrifice to work. Horcruxes, for example, were a product of the Necromancy Art. Salazar was apparently ashamed that the name Slytherin had become associated with such magic.

Harry's thoughts were interrupted by a very feminine sigh. Kathryn, it seemed, was waking up.

"Morning," she said kissing him.

"And good morning to you," Harry replied. "Sleep well?"

"Mmmmm!"

"You okay?"

"Wonderful! Yesterday turned out to be wonderful despite my fears, my Husband," she said with a slight giggle.

"Fears?"

"I feared something like this could happen," she said. "I had noticed things, you know? Older girls from my school were not returning after Fifth or Sixth Year and almost all of them were Muggle Borns like me. Not all of them, mind you, but given the Pureblood bigotry and such it was enough to make me think. I might have not given it much thought if they had all been at the bottom of the class. I would have assumed they failed to achieve adequate O.W.L.s to continue or something. But many I knew and I doubted their marks had anything to do with it. So, I thought something else more sinister was the cause. I was right, wasn't I?"

"So it would seem," Harry agreed. "I'm not sinister, am I?"

"Oh no. Not at all, Love. Nope, you're just very randy."

"No regrets then?"

"I won't say I wanted this to be true," she replied.

"I'm sure none of you do or did."

"But given the realistic options, this is far better than I could have hoped for."

"I'm glad you see it that way."

"So Harry then," she said, "what's that short for?"

"What's what short for?"

"Harry! It is a diminutive."

"What?"

"Like Kate is short for Kathryn and several similar girls names. So, are you a Harold or a Henry, as those are usually Harrys."

"Er – neither. Just Harry."

"A Duke truly named Harry? That's unique."

"There's a Prince Harry," Harry said.

"Ah, but his real name is Henry," Kathryn replied.

"Sorry. I'm just Harry."

"That's alright. I like Harry ... and Little Harry too," she whispered.

"So," Kathryn asked, "what are your titles then?"

"Too many," Harry moaned in protest.

"Please?" she asked. "If I am to be your wife, shouldn't I know?" she added with a pout. How was Harry to refuse that.

"Fine," he moaned in mock protest. "I am Harry the First – one of a kind I guess. I'm the twenty-seventh Duke of Charenwell, a title granted under the authority of Henry III of England in 1216 to Justin Potter. I'm also the thirty-fifth Count of Darby, a title granted in 920 by the Anglo-Saxon King Edward the Elder to Karsten Potter. I'm the forty-first Lord of the Isle by the claim of Dargoth Potter when he founded his colony here in 680. I am the forty-ninth Lord Potter beginning with Sir Galahad Potter upon his knighthood under Arthur Pendragon in 520. Finally, I am the forty-seventh Lord Black, which I inherited from my Cousin and Godfather Sirius Black, a line dating back to Sir Calogrenant Black, also upon his knighthood in 520."

"So much better than that Boy-Who-Lived nonsense," Kathryn giggled. "Now, do you want a little play time before breakfast?"

"As time is not a factor, I'd love some..."

"Well?" Harry asked.

Harry was seated at the center of the base of a large, U shaped table made of polished walnut. It was placed at the center of the floor of a specially built room in Black House. Although the House was weeks away from being finished, this room on the Ground Floor was complete in every respect. He thought of this as the Briefing Room. With him at the main table were Hermione and Luna. In this "society" Consorts were considered extensions of their husbands with equal authority. That meant his other allies were there as well: Neville and Susan, Bill and Fleur, Fred and Alicia, George and Angelina, Frank and Alice and Remus and his new Consort Stephanie. Also at this table were Minerva and Mallory by virtue of their jobs within the Government; Minerva's as head of Educational Development and Mallory as the newly appointed Head of Health Services, a part-time position established to ensure there would be adequate health services for the soon to be rapidly expanding population. Kingsley

had his seat as well and Moody's was currently empty. Given that this meeting, and perhaps many others, touched on Muggle Britain Cooperation, Sir Stephen was there at the table as were Major General Churchill and Air Vice Marshall Graham. Finally there was Mr. Henry Parks from the Charenwell Foreign Ministry who was now in charge of the "Travel Office" which would oversee the evacuation from Britain. The Foreign Minister might have been here as well if he was not in Paris talking with the I.C.W. Behind the table were rows of small desks, each row higher than the one in front. At these desks sat the various Concubines, now eighty-one in number, along with Cissy, several officers from the British Armed forces and several others involved with both the ongoing construction projects and the impending evacuations.

At the front of the room was a screen, a podium for a speaker and for now a pedestal upon which was a golden cup. Mad-eye Moody was waiving his wand over the cup, noting various magical effects.

"Right then," he said as he finished. "This thing is little more than gold plated pewter. The only active magic on it is a charm that prevents the gold from wearing off or the true nature of the material from being easily detected."

"How did you detect it then?" a voice asked.

"Weight's off," Moody said. "Were this solid gold, it would have been a lot heavier. Clever work though. Whoever made it probably made a mint selling it."

"Why's that?" another voice asked.

"The heraldry," Moody replied. "The designs on the Cup are consistent with the heraldry one would expect of the lost Cup of Helga Hufflepuff, one of the Four Founders of Hogwarts and from that formal magical education in Europe."

"I've already been told it was a fake," Harry said. "Is there anything else?"

"Aye," Moody replied. "Trace signatures of dark magic. Nothing active mind you."

"What kind of Dark Magic?" Padma asked. "We are acutely aware that Britain is overly generous with that label." There were some chuckles in the room.

"I would agree Lassie," Moody said, "but I think we can all agree Necromancy is university evil."

"Necromancy?" Major General Churchill asked.

"Aye," Moody growled, "Death Magic! It is a magic that derives all of its power from death. In its more benign form - which is right nasty, by the way - it derives its source magic from desecration of the dead, which is why we magicals prefer cremation to burial. Its more powerful forms require murder or human sacrifice. It is the bane of our world. Fortunately it is also exceedingly rare and there are very few practitioners as there is but one punishment for even dabbling in it, which is to join the dead yourself.

"More than anything else, Necromancy has been the bane on our kind for thousands of years. In very ancient times, we magicals were the Healers for the world. Our abilities led our kind to lead the religions and faiths. Even in your Bible you see hints of us, those said to be touched by God. But you also see the darkest side of us. The Old Testament says that one should not suffer a witch to live, does it not? Two things about the witch they were talking about. First, she was not a daughter of Israel and second she was most likely a Necromancer. With the rise of Christianity, those who continued the vile practice merely reinforced another problem, that being we magicals were usually the Priests and Priestesses in the non Judeo-Christian beliefs. It was the start of a vicious cycle that led to the Burning Times throughout most of Europe. It is odd to note that very, very few magicals ever faced the pyre. Thousands, if not millions perished, but few if any were actually magical. Most were simply very independently minded women, or they were simply convenient fuel for the fire - or they were Jews."

"This is all very interesting," Harry said, "perhaps you should write? But let's get back on point. You said that cup had been related to Necromancy?"

"Aye," Moody said, "and I use the past tense intentionally. It was once. It is not whatever it was now. All that is left is the taint."

"Could it have been a Horcrux?" Harry asked.

Moody then gave a brief lecture on what a Horcrux was. He concluded by saying: "This cup could have been one, but had it been one I am at a loss as to why it is no longer one yet still remains undamaged. My understanding of that vile magic is the object must be destroyed. I am unaware of another means to break it."

"But it could have been?" Harry asked.

"Possible, not probable," Moody replied.

"Let's ask this another way," Hermione said, "is it entirely impossible that it could never, ever have been a Horcrux?"

"No," Moody conceded. "It has the taint of Necromancy. I can't say it was one, but that taint means as unlikely as it is, it can't be absolutely ruled out."

"Were it still one, could you have detected it?" Hermione asked.

"Aye."

"Could you do those spells on Harry?"

"Aye, but I don't see why."

"Do it," Hermione and Harry said in unison.

Moody did as asked. To the audience, nothing seemed to happen.

"Well?" Harry asked.

"There is a taint of Necromancy," Moody replied. "The signature is almost identical to that on the Cup. Whatever it was, it is gone, but..."

"Has Dumbledore ever asked you to do this before?" Hermione asked.

"Aye," Moody said. "Twice. Once was a few years ago with some book of some sort. Never told me what it was and I had the impression I was merely confirming his findings. The second time was last week. He had this ring thing and had done something to it. In both cases, it was similar to what I've noted here today."

"So the ring thing was not a Horcrux but could have been once?" Hermione asked.

"Aye, if you assume the others were as well."

"I think that confirms our suspicions, don't you Harry?"

"It does indeed," Harry replied.

"Suspensions?" Frank asked.

"I don't trust Dumbledore with most everything," Harry said, "however he has a theory that makes some sense that I was told not long after arriving here. Dumbledore believes Tom Riddle - that's the real name of the one who calls himself Voldemort - made several Horcruxes, any one of which could anchor his soul to this plane and allow for his return. Dumbledore suspected that much for some time, but only received proof following the incident in the Chamber of Secrets were I destroyed a powerful, magical object."

"It was the diary, wasn't it?" Ginny asked in shock.

"Yes Ginny, it was," Harry replied. "What caught Dumbledore attention was not that Riddle had made a horcrux, but how cavalier he seemed to be about it. Most wizards who would attempt such a feat would not have left it lying about or in the possession of even the most loyal follower. However this one was in the possession of Lucius Malfoy. Whether Malfoy knew its true nature is not certain, but he seemed to know it could take possession of a person, which was why

he slipped the diary to Ginny. It did as expected and many of the victims of Malfoy's recklessness are in this room. Ginny was possessed and set loose the basilisk. Hermione and Penelope were petrified by the beast. I was nearly killed by it. Anyone here who was at Hogwarts at the time was at risk. But that's history now.

"Riddle's attitude convinced Dumbledore that there was more than one, something which made some sense to me as well. I suspected there was a chance that Malfoy was not the only Death Eater entrusted with one so when I was able to confiscate their vaults, I asked the Goblins to keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary. There was more to my request, but anyway the result of the request was they found the forgery before you which has been believed to be the genuine Cup of Hufflepuff for some time and was in the Vault of a family that had no claim to it whatsoever.

"Now the reason we tested that cup is something happened the day I bonded with Hermione. Dumbledore further believed that Riddle 'accidentally' fashioned another Horcrux when he tried to kill me all those years ago. I'm not certain that truly was the case, but if he had made one to many, it is possible he destabilized his soul such that a fragment of it did transfer to me that night. That's what gave me a connection to him.

"Anyway, Hermione combined two very powerful love based rituals upon our bonding. When they completed something happened. I passed out. But more than that, my scar and connection to Voldemort was gone. What we think happened was the love based magic destroyed or released the soul fragment in me and, due to the connection it had with the others, created a chain reaction that destroyed the others. Moody's tests lend credence to this theory."

"As does the fact that Riddle was in a coma for several weeks following," Kingsley added.

"That as well," Harry said. "The evidence now suggests there are no horcruxes."

"So he's mortal?" Frank Longbottom asked.



"Well there's no way to tell short of trying to snuff him, which is still easier said than done."

"And why is that?" Major General Churchill asked.

"He doesn't stick his neck out," Harry said. "He only appears in public when he believes he is invulnerable. To get to him, we either have to allow him to attack with what he believes is overwhelming force, and even then he will be at the rear of the attack, or we have to get through his defenses. We believe his headquarters is both heavily protected magically and heavily defended by his followers. It also has the annoying problem of being hidden so well that it's doubtful his own followers know exactly where it is."

"But your war is with the magical government," Sir Stephen began.

"Indeed," Harry agreed. "As I understand it we have sufficient justification for war as it now stands. As you are aware, Sir Stephen, three things prevent us from moving at this time. First and foremost, we have nothing to move with. I will not place the lives of my people in harm's way unless victory is all but a foregone conclusion. Second, any operations in Britain must be coordinated with Her Majesty's government. We have a good start, but are not yet at a point where we could go in - assuming we had the means - and operate without possible exposure to the non-magicals. Keeping as low a profile as possible is essential for the long term. This requires, as I see it, a professional fighting force that would not appear magical and can function alongside the non-magicals. Finally, while my government is justified in taking action right now, I would prefer such action have international support. As vile as the British Magical Government is, the problems are mostly internal. However Voldemort and his followers are or should be a concern for the entire magical world. It should also be noted that they are the immediate threat not just to their own people but the world. They must be destroyed, and if in destroying them Britain falls, so much the better."

"So your real target is this Voldemort chap?" Major General Churchill asked. He had been fully briefed but wanted this on the record.

"They are the immediate threat to us all, General," Harry said. "The inability of the Magical British Government to contain that threat is an equal problem, but an essential goal of this war will be the extermination of the Voldemort pestilence."

"Extermination?" Frank asked.

"Moody? Would you explain to our friends how one gets a Dark Mark and becomes a Death Eater?"

"Murder," Moody said, "usually brutal in nature. Torture and rape are encouraged, although not necessary if the initiate is sufficiently callous. Initiates are hardened by participating in raids, usually as rapists or torturers, before being called upon to earn their mark with a kill."

"And the stuff about being bewitched into doing it?"

"Rubbish," Moody growled. "The mark requires the initiate to act of their own free will. What we have are a class of psychopaths who enjoy torture and murder mainly because they don't consider their victims as human. What's worse is once they achieve the mark, they are so seeped in the philosophy and the darkest arts it becomes an addiction. They must kill to survive. Even the werewolves are not that bad."

"But Professor Snape," someone began.

"Rapes his female students," Moody finished. "It's not as satisfying as murder, but he does it often enough that he does not have to physically kill. Killing the spirit can work as well if done often enough."

"What we are dealing with," Harry said, "is a disease, one that if left unchecked will spread and destroy everything. The Death Eaters number in the hundreds as far as we have been able to determine. The majority of them keep a low profile. They are infiltrators as opposed to soldiers. But each and every one of them is a serial killer of the worst sort. They are rabid dogs! Left alone they spread infection and death. Unlike rabies, there is no cure for their affliction. The merciful thing to do is put them down. Unfortunately, it is also

necessary because so long as they live no one is safe. The fact that they have been protected by that government and even by Dumbledore shows the whole system is a cancer. Those who bear the Dark Mark are dead men walking. None will survive. The rest will learn that things are not the way they were led to believe. Magical Britain must be destroyed so that it can be rebuilt."

"Are you suggesting a whole sale witch hunt?" Major General Churchill asked.

"No sir," Harry said. "The vast majority of magicals are peaceful and law abiding. Their leadership is an issue and these Death Eaters are the major problem. It is only the Death Eaters who will be hunted down and exterminated. Those who stand with them will be legitimate military targets, but should they be captured, they will be spared for the most part. Unfortunately, the remainder of the population will suffer, as that is the nature of war, is it not?"

"But if they are scattered about, hidden, and all of that, how can you possible find them?" Major General Churchill asked.

"That's easy," Harry said, "we make them find us. Voldemort is not about to look the other way if someone else is playing in his sandbox. Fred?"

Fred Weasley stood and walked to the front of the room. "I'm not about to discuss the details of military tactics," he began, "but we have come up with a few ideas that might work, assuming we have the forces necessary. To begin with, George and I are working on certain portable magical wards that Sappers might use to great advantage and will provoke a response from the enemy when activated. The wards, should they work - and mind you we've only just begun to work on them but as they're not needed yesterday - anyway, should they work, they will be similar to the wards that protect us here. Okay, maybe without the Death bit, but close enough. Erecting these wards might be easy enough. Once they're up, the lands within them are barred to magicals from without, unless they choose to walk. It will also take those lands off the detection grid which is sure to provoke a response from the Ministry ... and

Voldemort. Harry knows the bastard and he would send out folks to find out why Devonshire is gone."

"Leading them into our troops," Harry said.

"Devonshire?" Major General Churchill asked.

"For example," Harry said. "Our goal would be to take and hold various magical communities, throw up these wards and force the enemy to respond. They would, with your help, run into a force they are not prepared to deal with. Magicals discount guns and such and are foolish to do to. They would probably engage piecemeal and be slaughtered, or so we hope. The extension of this strategy is to drive them north, county by county if necessary. Should the wards work, we should not need to have an occupying force in the rear and can take and hold ground without a huge force. Eventually, and assuming there's still any fight left in them, we can box them in and fall upon them."

"Bloody hell, you've already thought this through?" the General asked.

"I trust the twins to deliver in time," Harry said. "They're bloody brilliant. But this idea is dependent upon their delivering. I'm certain they will, but should they not we would need another idea."

The meeting was then turned over to Colonel Wilson, the SAS Colonel who had at one time served under one Captain Granger. He explained what they were thinking for the Charenwell Army. Mobility was the key, he said. The not yet existent army was not expected to face the Red Army on the North German Plain, but to engage in very mobile warfare and very unconventional warfare by Muggle standards. It was to be an army that was based upon small and highly maneuverable units. The main unit would be a Company of roughly a hundred and seventy men. It would have four platoons, three "strict infantry" with "mostly shooters" but also with a light machine gun section and a sniper section of two men each. The fourth platoon would include their heavy machine guns, sappers and mortars. Each company would also have a dedicated Air Controller to coordinate with the Air Force. This structure was not like that of the British Army, as they tended to organize at much higher levels.

The British Army advisors were still debating the need for artillery. The problem was mobility. The idea was a mobile force that did not have to rely upon motor transport. These were Merlin Club Officers after all. They knew about magical transport and while they understood that magical transport from Charenwell to Britain would be inadvisable at best, within Britain itself was another matter. The thought for now was that the artillery would be on call for support purposes as plans dictated, but the batteries would not be dedicated to any one unit.

The discussion then turned to weapons. The British Army would let the Charenwell folks figure out their magical kit. On the non-magical side, they would provide surplus L1A1 rifles, also known as the FN-FAL, which had been the standard infantry rifle in the British Army until very recently, so there were loads of them in storage. The rifles were long, 7.62mm NATO standard capable of both semi-automatic and full automatic fires. It had been phased out because it generally used a 20 round box magazine and the new ammo was much lighter than the 7.62mm, meaning a soldier with the new rifles could carry more. But that was Muggle thinking, the Colonel said. The Twins had discussed the possibility of replenishing charms such that so long as the charm was active and there was ammunition in the inventory, a soldier could shoot far more than twenty rounds from one magazine. Under ideal conditions, the Twin felt 500 or more rounds per magazine were possible. (Similar enhancements might be possible for the machine guns and maybe the mortar teams.) Thus a soldier could carry fewer magazines than before and still have far more firepower than any soldier on earth at his immediate disposal. Given the range, accuracy, reliability and stopping power of the L1A1 as compared to other weapons, the magically enhanced rifles would be hell on earth for any bad guys.

In addition to the rifles, the Army was prepared to provide them with light machine guns, one for every infantry squad in the infantry platoons. In the Heavy Weapons platoons there would be two light machine guns and four heavies, the American M2 .50 caliber which could do serious damage on most things, like engine blocks and, the Army folks hoped, Giants and dragons and such. It was their goal to give Charenwell the ability to bring overwhelming firepower to bear.

Which led to the Air Force brief. Updating all aircraft avionics, no problem. The planes had been weather restricted. The Air Force types said this was not a problem. They could fight in all weather. They would have the latest avionics, giving them night vision capability, FLIR (Forward Looking Infra Red, which could read heat signatures and allow the pilot to find a target based solely on that), MLD (Magical Looking Detection, something the Twins would work on that would allow a pilot to differentiate between a magical target and a non-magical) and GPS navigation. All of this would actually save weight, a key concern, as the new systems would weigh far less than their World War II systems. There would also be bombing computers and laser designators for the bombs, thus ensuring the bombs would hit a target with a high degree of precision, no dumb bombs, except at low altitude where the targeting system would be at its most effective.

But more critically, the Air Force representatives wanted to re-engine the aircraft. Given the facilities Charenwell already had at RAF Pottersport, all that was truly needed were the new engines. The old, piston driven engines were to be replaced by turbo-props with high efficiency propellers. This would significantly reduce the weight of the aircraft and, as the engines were actually more fuel efficient, increase range for certain. More important for the Air Force types, it meant they could fly on JP-5 as opposed to Aviation Gasoline. JP-5 was highly filtered diesel fuel, as opposed to the much more highly volatile, high octane gasoline. It was safer to store and less likely to explode. It was also cheaper. Even with the enhancements, the Typhoons, Bostons and Spitfires would not be able to stage out of Charenwell and support the Ground Forces wherever they went in Britain. But the RAF and Her Majesty's government would offer air fields (all former bases but now abandoned) for the Charenwell Air Force once the war was on.

It was far more than Harry had hoped for and he thanked the British military profusely. "It's a wonder you acted this quickly," he said.

"Object lesson from you, Sir," Major General Churchill replied. "Besides, you are paying for the extras, thus no need to go to Parliament and get mired in that nonsense."

"Fine then," Harry said, "How soon before I can give you recruits to train?"

"Got a bit to do," the General said. "The Elves and such will make it happen, bloody brilliant they are, but we need ranges, training areas and such. Also need more housing."

"Housing?"

"The lot of us here have families. The base has adequate housing for about two hundred of us. But we will need more. We're all Merlin Club types so we now know you'd be approaching us anyway as we have kids or wives and such at risk in this war. More important, however, is we need enough soldiers and such to train your lot proper. I need four hundred homes and such for my people total."

"Same here," Air Vice Marshal Graham said.

"Fine," Harry said. After all, he was already building a city and such.

"We will also need to recall certain folks to active service," the General said. "In particular..." He nodded to Colonel Wilson who walked to Harry and handed him some papers. Harry read them and handed each to Hermione.

"My father?" she asked. "He's a dentist!"

"He was also a commanding officer in the S.A.S.," the General said. "He has talents beyond fixing teeth we deem invaluable."

"You seem to want him here yesterday," Hermione said.

"As soon as possible," the General agreed. "We have the ability to recall him to active service by virtue of his commission. It's exceedingly rare to do so but..."

"My parents...?" Hermione began.

"It was always the intent to bring them here, Hermione," Harry said. "After all, they already have a house."

"But how do I explain all this?"

Harry chuckled. "I'm sure you'll figure that out. You're too brilliant not to and it's not like they'll be here tomorrow. Your Dad now has a really important job to do and we know your Mum will be needed as well. Not many dental practices around and our non-magicals will need those services. And as they will be concentrated in and around West Farm for now, she could corner the market as it were."

"I do want to see them again, Harry, but..."

"But?"

"What about the other girls? They have families as well and you promised them! It wouldn't be right to bring my parents here and deny that right to others."

"We are not about to bring them here tomorrow, Love. We have time to schedule and bring in others as well."

"Okay."

"How soon can your people move, General?" Harry asked.

"It's up to you folks to bring them in," the general replied. "That being said, with magical help we could pack out in a day. You lot have charms that can shrink and lighten loads and such. Assuming you have the transport, we could begin moving the families of those of us who are already here next week. They are service families after all. Moving on short notice is part of their lives."

"Remus?"

"We have three Q300's and a gate at London City Airport," Remus said. "We can begin moving as soon as you like, but for now only a hundred fifty a day. We're training more aircrews and getting more planes, but that is what we have for now."



"We have the housing for the General's people?"

"More will be needed, although that should not be a problem," Remus said. "The Elves and Goblins are not afraid of a little overtime and our few humans won't complain either. We can begin next week."

"Still," Harry said, "it'll be a week before any units are open for occupancy in Jamestown or at The Manors."

"The military types have housing available on base," Remus said. "The others can begin to arrive in a week or so."

"Need to ramp up our Muggle Born program then," Harry said. "Yes I want the families of ours here sooner rather than later, but we need to begin the Muggle Born Evacuation as soon as housing is available, if we're bringing in these others. Is that a problem?"

"Give us a couple weeks," Remus said. "We can deal with the military families and our wives and such, but we need a couple weeks to begin the evacuation proper, and more housing of course."

"In the interim?" Harry asked. "Our military friends and our own families? How soon?"

Remus looked at the man in the gallery who was introduced as being from the new "Travel Office." He was in charge of the relocation effort. "Milord," he said, "we can begin flights as early as this Thursday assuming they land at RAF Pottersport. Jamestown Airport will not be available for another three weeks."

"As the vast majority of our first arrivals will be living in or near RAF Pottersport, I think that is acceptable for now," Harry said. "Make it so, people. And Bill?"

"Sir?" Bill Weasley asked.

"Make sure your father is on the first flight out."

"Sir!"

"Remus?" Harry asked. When Remus nodded Harry continued. "We will forward to your office the lists of passengers. We will advise them of their departures once we know the possible flight schedules. Is that acceptable?"

"It is indeed, Harry."

"Next item," Harry said, "press releases. Luna?"

"Our articles will be in tomorrow's papers here in Charenwell, Harry Dear. The Quibbler goes out on Monday."

"Brilliant! Anything I missed?"

"Sir!" Kingsley said. He then explained the most recent meeting at the Ministry and Umbridge's plan to get around his demands.

"So she wants to send an assault force against us?" Harry asked.

"Fair assessment, Sir," Kingsley replied.

"And the bitch doesn't know about titles?"

"Apparently not, Sir."

"Do we have the list of Concubines?"

"Yes Sir," Kingsley said. "Nearly twelve hundred in the target age range alone. The list alone won't tell you if they're from Charenwell."

"But it gives us other information like full names, birthdays and where they initially went to school?"

"It does."

"Hopefully that is sufficient to find our missing girls and bring them home."

"But Umbridge's plan..."

"Is fatally flawed at its inception," Harry said. "She wants to send enemies through our wards? Suicide, unless they are not truly loyal to her in which case they are well advised to seek political asylum. As for the true girls? If we can get title to them, her plans are for naught from inception. She's basically handing over to us people she can't afford to lose. Can we get clear title to the girls once they are identified?"

"I'm sure it can be arranged," Kingsley said.

"Fine. Get the titles to our missing girls, then let the bitch move forward with her plan."

"Sir?"

"We let them send their fake offerings. We use a remote airfield and remove their wands, as it is common knowledge in Britain that magic mucks with Muggle stuff and airplanes are Muggle stuff. Use the Dakotas as they are largely immune to magic, no real electronics and so on. The disguised Aurors and such will be weaponless when they arrive here, assuming they pass through the wards unharmed. I'd be disappointed if they all did. Anyway, we could use that as an excuse to deal with Umbridge once and for all."

"Once and for all?"

"I think we can deal with her permanently and send a message that Charenwell will not tolerate Magical British politics. If she crosses that line, we'll get our girls back and that bitch will rue the day someone gave birth to her! My Cousin Dudley is a sick fuck. Gave me a movie about chainsaws that would fit nicely here."

"You're not serious, Harry!" Hermione said.

Harry showed her his hand. "The scars are still there and we know she's a piece of work. Wouldn't be surprised if she had the Mark. And I meant what I said. If you are a Death Eater, you already bought yourself a death sentence. If she's not marked, attempting an

invasion of my Country is enough to justify retaliation. It justifies war, Hermione. Snuffing her is being kind in comparison."

"I suppose," Hermione said meekly. Harry was right, but she didn't like it at all.

"Anything else?" Harry asked.

"My daughter Martha," Air Vice Marshall Graham said. "She was a witch. She went missing seven years ago just as she finished school. I think she might be a Concubine. Could you help her?"

Harry frowned for a moment, then smiled. "The bad guys know forty-two girls of ours are missing. They don't know that sixteen have been recovered. You do realize if we find her she will need to be bound to a wizard?"

Air Vice Marshall Graham nodded. "I trust it will be like what I see here. I trust she could be happy and my family could be together again."

"I wouldn't have it any other way," Harry said. "If she's on the list, we'll bring her back."

"Thank you, Sir!"

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).

HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black Potter, age 16 (SP-5).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).

12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura Carlson, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally Broadmoor, age 14 (Ra-3).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae McDonald, age 14 (Gr-3).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) Bates, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn Faulken, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy Tennyson, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone Tennyson, age 14 (Ra-3).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda Manning, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR: CHANGE IN DIRECTION

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4th, 1996 – a cave in Western Romania.

"My Queen," the Scout said, bowing in deference to the Head of his Clan.

"You have a report?" she replied.

"We have found it," he said proudly, "although it is further away than thought and the trip would require four nights without hunt or forage due to the lack of isolated resting spots at ideal distances."

"Still, it can be done?"

"We shall need to deal with our captors," the Scout said. "While I and the others are free, much of the Clan is not. Still, it would seem that is the hardest of our tasks, at least until we get there."

"I am confident that it will go well when we arrive."

"He is a wizard, my Queen. They have hunted us, killed us, driven us and penned us for centuries!"

"He is not like the others," the Queen said. "The others to not hesitate to curse us with their magic. He, on the other hand, never even bothered. He fought me as an equal and to achieve that silly task. He respected me and my children and for that he is unique and may well be the only one of his kind with whom we can treat."

"You have said this many times, my Queen. He was but a human child himself. Could it not be possible they grow vicious as they grow to adults?"

"Not him," the Queen said. "I feel it here," she said indicating her heart, "and here," she added pointing to her head.

"We do not speak his language," the Scout said.



"No, but the Fates tell me that he will understand us and we him, My Child. He is our last hope."

The Scout nodded. "Assuming he is one at all, that is true, My Queen."

"Are there others of our kind there?" the Queen asked.

"Two very different Clans. One lives by the sea and is unmolested by them. The humans there come to watch, not hunt or hurt and the Clan ignores them."

"That may work for us as well," the Queen nodded. "And the other?"

"Never saw or heard of their like before. That Clan is even more penned than we. They cannot speak. The free Clan says they are 'domesticated' and are no longer of the race but provide the humans all they need so that the free Clan remains unmolested. The free Clan says that strange group cannot live out of their pens. They know not how to hunt or fly. Only how to eat and breed."

"If the humans have such, if they don't need us for their hunts because they have all they can need of such, this might be a good thing?" the Queen thought allowed. "And if they are no longer truly like us, then our fate and their fate are not intertwined."

"Indeed, my Queen," the Scout replied. "So we are going?"

"We have looked and waited for a safe home for us and our young long enough, don't you think?" the Queen replied. "Our young are old enough to journey and none of our hens are grabbed. Now is the perfect time, is it not?"

"I would have to agree, My Queen, but it is a terrible risk."

"It is either that or die here and lose all the old memories forever," the Queen replied.

"We must leave," the Scout agreed. "And the Penners?"

"You know the two I wish spared," the Queen said. "I want them unharmed, brought with us and well cared for. The wizard seems to understand us and may well speak on our behalf and his mate as well. Those two must be well tended for during our journey, but must not escape. I want them unharmed and healthy when we arrive."

"And the others?" the Scout asked.

"Inform the others any who resist may be dealt with as they please."

"When do you wish to begin?"

"After the sun has set. We travel at night. No foraging along the way except as need to feed the humans."

"It will be done, my Queen."

"You shall lead the flock once we take to the skies for good, Grendel. You have earned the honor."

"Thank you, My Queen!"

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 - RAF Pottersport, Charenwell

It had begun as a good morning. As with the preceding Monday, Mallory announced the weekly winners in the Baby Boom Draw. Hermione was having twins, a boy and a girl, which prompted her to ask for a load of books from the library. She said there was no history of twins in her family and wondered how she had been so blessed, conceding it could be luck, but Hermione did not really believe in such things. The Weasley families also found out about their new additions. Bill's Mary (Howard) was having a son while Fred's Danielle (Carter) and George's Shelly (Parker) were having daughters. In addition, Luna was now expecting as was Alice Longbottom, so in addition to having his own sons and daughters, Neville would now have a brother or sister. Neville's Miriam (Riley) was also expecting now, as were Bill's Carla (Masterson), Fred's Elisa (Stout) and George's Roberta (Larson).

But the celebrations were short lived as Harry was called to the Air Base as Duke (so he'd be here twice, once as Duke and once as a student.) An irate Ground Staff was waiting for him at one of the Hangers.

"They want to re-engine all these planes!" Mr. Jenkins exclaimed. "Are they bloody mad?"

"Feasible, maybe," Mr. Jasper said. "Not terribly practical."

"They said it would improve range and safety," Harry replied.

"Aye, it might," Mr. Jasper said. "Might also be a right disaster. It's not like you can just pull one of these Merlins out and stick a totally different power plants in, bolt it up and there you go. They practically have to redesign the entire engine mountings and build from scratch, assuming it works at all! Merlin knows how much it'll cost. Those engines don't come cheap and the redesign and rebuild won't come cheap either, assuming it can be done at all!"

"It'd be quicker and probably less expensive to build them from the blueprints up," Mr. Jennings said. "Lot of unnecessary time and money just for a few miles additional range. This isn't upgrading and existing aircraft. For all practical purposes, these would be entirely different aircraft and there's no telling at this stage what the new planes' handling characteristics might be."

"They were saying at least a fifty percent increase in range," Harry said.

"And we'd be without an Air Force for years," Jennings said. "They tell you how long this scheme of theirs would take?"

"I assumed it wouldn't happen today, but they do know our timetable."

"And they'd be bloody lucky to meet it, Sir. What's more annoying is we could probably achieve most of their goals in a matter of a few hours, not years."

"Oh?"

"They're thinking like mechanics and engineers, assuming they're thinking at all," Mr. Jennings said. "What they are not thinking like are wizards! You want to increase range? Magically expand the fuel tanks! You want to increase payload as well? Feather Weight Charms could do the trick! Our lads can achieve all they promise from a range and payload standpoint in a few hours."

"I hadn't thought of that," Harry said.

"Neither, apparently, did they," Mr. Jennings said. "Forces me to wonder if there's a Defense Contractor out there driving this. It's not like there're companies in Britain that deal with Rolls Royce Merlins and Pratt & Whitney Twin Wasps all the time. We need those Air Force types for tactics, operations, avionics and weapon systems. We don't need them to get these planes to fly!"

"We've been keeping these planes flying since before any of them were born," Mr. Jasper said. "I bet not a one of them even saw these planes outside a war museum or air show. When it comes to these birds, we're the experts, Sir."

"If you want the Air Force to be ready when the Army is, let them stick to what they do know," Mr. Jennings said.

"And the fuel issue?" Harry asked.

"Aviation gasoline is more volatile, but not significantly more so," Mr. Jennings said. "The cost of their fix far outweighs any benefit gained in terms of the fuel."

"Might want them to dash that idea in favor of figuring a way to rearm these planes," Mr. Jasper said. "The twenty-millimeter canon was questionable when built and the Vickers machine guns are pea shooters."

"Very well," Harry sighed. "Show me. Double range and payload of some of these birds with magic, and we'll tell them thanks but no thanks."

"Sir!" the two men barked.

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 - Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office,  
Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

Arthur Weasley had no way of knowing that the Quibbler Article was only about half of what was published in Charenwell. The Article was about Concubines, an all but forbidden subject in Britain. It was, to say the least, disturbing. The article focused on the illegal sale of "foreign" witches by Dumbledore and their fate, to the extent that it was known. It was graphic, describing the stark brothels most girls found themselves in and the universal lack of concern for them has people. It spoke of their abuse and mistreatment at the hands of supposedly upstanding members of society, men who it would seem would be more than willing to sell their surplus daughters into such a hell. Arthur knew the Ministry would be in an uproar and would send Aurors to shut down the Quibbler most likely. What Arthur did not know was that the Articles dealing with the Auction and Dumbledore's recent efforts to sell off as many Muggle Born girls as possible would be in next month's issue. (A special issue was being delivered to target Muggle Born families that week, which detailed the Auction and who had been sold. It was timed to reach the recipients on Thursday, after the last Muggle Borns sold at the Auction had been relocated to Charenwell.)

The whole article was clearly a denunciation of Magical Britain and was sure to inspire a new wave of investigations from the I.C.W. Being a Pureblood, Arthur was not entirely unaware of Concubines. While no one talked about that openly, it was only truly a secret from the Muggle Borns. But the article stressed that was nothing more than Pureblood bigotry. The reason for the bond was to make multiple marriages work, not create a slave class. The article outlined the origins of the bond and the original laws enacted to encourage the bonds. It was not to enslave Muggle Born witches, but to strengthen magic. Purebloods tended to become weaker magically each generation without an infusion of new blood in their lines. Magically, on average, Muggle Borns and Half Bloods were more powerful than Purebloods and always had been. The Bond was to ensure witches gave birth to magical children, lest the entire system collapse.

There were even lengthy quotes attributed to none other than Salazar Slytherin who seemed to advocate the bond as a way to ensure wizards took witches as mates, and preferable Muggle Born or those modern elitists called Half Bloods. Slytherin, if the article was to be believed, did not advocate keeping Muggle Borns out of society. Quite the opposite in fact. He argued magical education should be compulsory for all Muggle Borns and highly encouraged for the rest. Basically, Britain had used something that was meant to better their world and perverted it into a slave caste to justify the false belief of Pureblood Supremacy. That last bit Arthur knew was true, which was why he had never acquired a Concubine as he felt to do so would only justify what he saw as a vile practice.

But, he now had his own doubts about those beliefs. After his meeting with Bill on Friday, he received letters from Ginny, Fred and George. That Ginny was allowed to write him said that not all Concubine situations were vile. Moreover, Ginny used several code words and phrases she was taught as a child. Those words let Arthur know she was not being forced to write the letter and that what she wrote was the truth as she saw it. She was happy in her new life! Then again, she stressed, she was in Charenwell and not Britain and bonded to Harry and not some vile Death Eater spawn. There was even a picture of her with Luna and Hermione. She was dressed like a princess, Arthur thought, as were her two friends. Arthur knew from the Will reading that Hermione and Luna were Harry's Consorts, but aside from the different dresses, all were easily more than Arthur could afford, they all looked elegant and were wearing jewels fit for a princess. He even noted the wedding band and engagement ring on Ginny's left hand.

I do love it here, Daddy. This place is wonderful, and it's not just because I live in a big, big house and have no want for things. It truly is wonderful. Harry's such a dear to all of us and we're all friends, well family really, so I have all kinds of things to do and friends to do them with. Not much of a Holiday in some ways. We're really busy here, but it's loads of fun to and I'm learning so much!

We won't be going back to Hogwarts. With what we've learned here, why bother? But don't fret about my education. It's well in hand.

Minerva (Professor McGonagall) is here and one of Harry's Potter wives (as am I). She's been a Potter for over fifty years! Anyway, she's got a plan for us so we'll get our educations and she's in charge of setting up a school system here as well. So, while she's quite busy, she'll still be teaching Transfiguration. But she gets to teach what she wants and not what the Ministry says and, as there are no laws here about it, we can train to become Animagus!

Minerva has also gotten us other good professors. Frank and Alice Longbottom got better after Neville killed Bellatrix LeStrange and they'll be teaching Charms and Potions. Dora Tonks will be teaching us Defense with Remus Lupin (although as he's like the Minister of Magic here, we'll probably see more of Dora.) We'll learn Herbology at a place called Charlestown which has the largest magical greenhouses anywhere (at least until Neville Longbottom gets his up and running!) For Magical Creatures we'll go to a Preserve where there are all kinds of them. Hagrid would have kittens here! Luna's been there and says it's amazing! I can't remember his name, but there's a bloke in Pottersport who's well respected in Astronomy and will be teaching us both the magical kind and Muggle as well! Minerva has her eye on a magical history professor, but there's an Elf named Marta who knows loads as well. Arithmancy and Ancient Runes are still up in the air, but the Twins are considered experts so there you go. Minerva is working on getting some dedicated Professors and Fred and George are wicked busy. We won't have Muggle Studies as you know it because we live Muggle already. But William will be teaching us about Art, Literature and Music. (He's another Elf and in charge of our Library which is HUGE!) Divination is right out! You either have the gift or you don't so unless you have the gift, it makes no sense to teach it. Finally, we'll also be learning Healing. Madam Pomfrey would not have been as over worked if we were taught basic Healing and here we have Mallory (one of Harry's Black wives) who's totally brilliant at it!

The letter went on to say that her new "school" would be at her new home and for Harry and others. It turned out that Ginny was Harry's eight "Wife" and since she had bonded to him, thirteen more had joined the Potter-Black family, most of whom had not finished school either because they were not much older than Ginny, or because they had been denied further education when they too were first made

Concubines. The School would not have seven Years, but three levels. Juniors would be those who had finished First or Second Year and maybe some older ones who wanted additional tutoring or to take different courses than they had. At the end of Juniors Study, they would be around the middle of Fourth Year. Intermediate Study was O.W.L. preparation and ended with those exams and this was where Ginny would begin. Finally, Senior Study was for N.E.W.T.s.

She also told him about some of the other families in their area. It seemed that Susan Bones and Neville Longbottom were not missing as everyone believed. Susan was now Lady Longbottom, Neville's Consort and part of a family that now had fourteen "Wives." He still didn't understand that term. Concubines could not be wives, could they? Bill also had fourteen now, including Fleur as Consort. What stunned him even more was that Fred and George also had such families.

Still, the letter was easily the longest he had ever read from his daughter and reminded him of a more mature version of the Ginny he remembered from before her First Year: chatty, upbeat and carefree, as opposed to the far more moody girl that had returned from that horrible year. Arthur sighed. It might not have been the life he wanted for her, but she sounded so happy. He folded the long letter and placed them and the photos in a hidden pocket in his robes before opening another letter he had also received, also with a Gringotts postmark.

Dad:

Things are happening here faster than I expected. Enclosed are your identification and travel documents. Touch your wand to them to activate them. Keep all of them with you at all times. You need to be at City of London Airport, Gate 14 at nine o'clock Saturday morning. Pack everything into a travel bag and shrink it down if you need to and be sure to look like a real Muggle!

Oh, and don't forget to buy Ginny a present. It's her birthday on Sunday after all.

Bill.



MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

After the meeting at the Air Field, Harry was stressed. The meeting was a bit of a shock, but it made sense to him and he now knew that the Muggle folks would need to work more closely with his people if this was going to work. The stress only increased as he was next scheduled for a meeting at the Manor with Fleur. Fleur was not going to be there as an employee of Gringotts or as Bill's wife, but as the daughter of the Magical Minister of France whose parents wanted her to negotiate something with the Duke of Charenwell. Harry had no idea what this something was, only that it had been discussed with Hermione and Luna yesterday and they would be there as well. He really needed to relax before the meeting, and fortunately Cissy had become very adept at that since she had bonded with him. It was a nice break before he had to recompose himself and lead Cissy, now back in her Executive Secretary to the Duke role and not Harry Stress Reliever, to the conference room on the First Floor where the others were waiting for him.

"To understand what my parent's wish to discuss, you must understand a little about Veela," Fleur said. "You may recall my grandmother was Veela, yes?"

Harry thought about it for a moment and then remembered something from the Tri-Wizard Tournament almost two years ago: Fleur's wand core was Veela hair from her Grandmother. "Your wand?" he said.

"Indeed," Fleur replied telling the others about its core. "My grandmother was Veela and she bonded and mated with a wizard. It is rare, but not unheard of.

"Now, true Veela are not human, but are related to other magical beings such as Sirens. The males do not ever look human at all. The females can look human, although their true form is not. There is a reason for this. To understand, you must know that Veela magical cores are different than human ones. The human core is self generating, it is always generating magic and, as a result, it always radiates magic at some level. Veela, on the other hand, do not to this. Their cores absorb magic."

"Like lizards and mammals?" Hermione asked. "Mammals generate their own body heat while lizards have to absorb it from their environment?"

"A good analogy," Fleur replied. "The differences between male and female Veela is that they prefer different magic. Males prefer more chaotic, animalistic magic while females prefer more organized magic. As a result, male Veela prefer to be around magical creatures while females prefer certain magical beings, in particular humans and true elves. Both males and females have a magical Allure that attracts the magic they prefer."

"So they feed on magic?"

"They can, but rarely. They will actively deplete magic from an attacker or when they are enraged or in rare instances when they are magically starving. As Veela absorb all kinds of ambient magic, starvation as such is usually associated with certain illnesses. However, they usually don't drain magic, so much as absorb that which is in their immediate environment. Veela females prefer human magic and their Allure attracts humans, in particular human males. Moreover, humans leak more magic when they are emotional, so the Allure also elicits emotional reaction. Lust, passion, anger, jealousy, pleasure and ecstasy all release large amounts of magic, but not enough to harm the human. Thus getting the males to lust after them and the females jealous of them results in a large 'feed' for lack of a better word. Sex releases even more which is why Veela are known as seductresses. Most female Veela like it when wizards cannot restrain their lust and give in to the wizards' advances because the magical release is so large. Then again, should a witch have a similar emotional reaction, the Veela will enjoy that too."

"On rare occasions, however, a Veela may develop a 'taste' as it were for a particular wizard's magic. She becomes addicted to his magic and needs to be around it and eventually may even need to bond with it and him. When this happens, she ceases to be truly Veela and can mate with the wizard. In fact, should she develop such an addiction, she can only mate with that wizard and can never mate with another Veela."

"The children of such a mating are far more human than Veela. Their core will be that of a human as in it will generate its own magic so there will be no need – or ability – to absorb background magic. The children of such a pairing are almost always girls. The rare boy is always born without magic, but the girls are always witches. The children of Half-Veela are the same. The boys have no magic, the girls are witches. The children of quarter Veelas are considered fully human and will generally all be magical as well.

"Two aspects of Veela in Half and Quarter Veela children: one is the Allure, although it is much weaker than in Pure Veela. The other is the Veela Bonding, although that's not truly accurate as it is different. But it is a bonding ability none the less and it is unique to them. It also is not common, although it is far more common than the Pure Veela bond. Certain things are necessary for this bond to form. First, a part Veela can only form such a bond with a wizard who is more powerful magically than she is. Second, it can only form with a wizard who is at least as magically, physically and sexually mature as she is. Third, it can only form with a wizard who is not affected by her Allure. This can be a problem as while the Allure will not affect a Wizard who is in control of his emotions, it also will not affect a wizard who is in a love bond with another. Fortunately for me, Bill was not in a love bond when we met. Next, the bond requires the part Veela to either be in love with the wizard or be very capable of falling in love with that wizard. There must also be a compatibility between their magics such that they complement each other or at least her. In this, it is not that she is absorbing his magic like a Pure Veela might, rather the presence of his magic heightens hers. Part Veela can feel this even at a young age. Finally, the part Veela witch must accept the Bond."

"And the Wizard?" Hermione asked.

"Can accept the Bond or not," Fleur said. "I accept my Bond with Bill very early on. I was fortunate he fell in love with me on his own so I could become his Consort."

"And if he didn't?"

Fleur shrugged. "I would not lose my magic. But accepting the Bond meant I could neither bond with nor love another, ever. Had he not taken me as his Wife and Consort, I would still be very pretty, but I would be a Spinster or would have to choose to be married in an arranged sense. Moreover, once I accepted the bond, my Allure changed, just as it would with a Pure Veela under similar circumstances."

"How did it change?"

"Whereas before most men affected by my Allure would desire me, now only the most self-centered and shallow and with serious self-esteem issues can and they are the easiest to reject since they pretty much expect to be rejected. Right now, the only male I've met who truly lusts after me is Bill's brother Ron."

"Ouch!" Hermione said.

"It was annoying," Fleur said. "Fortunately, he's no threat to Bill and I have no desire for him whatsoever just as I have no desire for any other man."

"So why is this necessary?" Harry asked.

"My parents are going to ask you to take my sister Gabrielle into your family, Harry."

"WHAT? WHY?"

"Whether you agree or not," Fleur said, "Gabrielle is to be moved here. My Papa is Minister of Magic in France and is now a target for Dark Forces and they wish Gabrielle to be safe. We both know she would be safe here in Charenwell."

"But why my family? Surely you would prefer your sister to be with you?"

"True, but she needs to be with you more."

"How...?" Then Harry gasped! "You're telling me she's bonded to me? But how? She's what? Nine or ten years old? Are you telling me being part-Veela means she's already of bonding age?"

"Gabrielle will be ten in November," Fleur said calmly, "and actually her being part Veela means she will reach bonding age later than most witches. Bonding age is when the Wizard can bond with her, Harry, not when she can bond with him. That is one difference between her and normal witches. If the conditions are right, she can Bond to a wizard and that bond is for life, but remember it is not a Bond that affects the Wizard at all. He could live his entire life never knowing the bond existed. All this means for Gabrielle is you are her only true shot at love and a true husband or Bond Mate."

"But how can there even be a bond like that if I don't agree?" Harry asked. "I had to agree and have sex with all the others to complete the bond!"

"Sounds more like a loyalty bond," Hermione said.

"It is, although like the other bonds between a man and woman, it might one day be more," Fleur said.

"I don't understand," Harry began.

"Loyalty bonds can be done without both parties knowing," Hermione said. "It usually doesn't work that way, but it can happen that way."

"Why did no one say anything about that?"

"Harry, we told you about the bonds that are relevant to you," Luna said. "You know of the Concubine Bond and probably more about that bond than most all of Magical Britain and you know because it is important. The same is true about the maturation of that bond and the Consort Bond, as those are important too. We've also discussed what we think happened with Cissy and this Coven Bond. And we did discuss Loyalty Bonds to some extent, just not this facet as it has not come into play yet."

"Besides," Hermione said, "I would argue this is not yet a true bond. It sounds like a precondition for a true bond, although one that binds one of the future parties to that potential bond, not unlike a Life Debt. But it doesn't sound like it is one either."

"This is true," Fleur said. "The Bond merely identifies her one possible mate. Had she not Bonded, nothing would say if Harry could have been her one possible mate but it seems certain he would have been a candidate. Having Bonded, my sister chose him above any other contenders. For love it can only be Harry now. For children, she can accept another should Harry let her."

"A precondition for a bond?" Harry asked.

"Well, a precondition for a life or long term bond," Hermione said. "A magical bond between two people that can or will last a lifetime can't just happen. They all have their own preconditions that if they do not exist prevent the bond from forming. Despite what happened to us, Harry, you can't truly enter into a Consort Bond by pure accident. Likewise, you can't accidentally take a Concubine Bond. And Cissy's bond was not accident either. Each had preconditions."

"Okay..."

"The Consort Bond is a natural bond between a witch and her life mate," Hermione continued. "For it to form, the witch and her husband must be physically old enough to have children as the Bond is about love and having a family. The couple must also be healthy enough to have children. If either is unable to make a baby, the Bond would never take hold. Next, the couple must be emotionally mature enough at least in regard to their relationship with one another for the bond to take. You and I were pretty young. Then again, our bond had been five years in the making, hadn't it? You didn't bond with me out of lust or raging teenage hormones, not I you. We were not crushing on each other were we? No, this was a mature form of love. Then there is the actual rite which finalizes the bond. I offered myself to you in every respect and without reservation. You accepted me in the same vein and we consummated the relationship. It probably helped that we were both virgins. It certainly helped that we had not been physically intimate like that before. In that regard, our first time

together like that is immensely magical. Had we been lovers before, it is possible the Bond may have formed, but less likely because the magic is not as strong then. Had any of these conditions been lacking, we might still have had a wonderful relationship and life together, just not the full Bond."

"Okay," Harry said, "but what about the Concubine Bond? All I needed to do was buy the witch right?"

"That Bond is far more complicated, Harry," Hermione said. "It too has loads of preconditions that must be met before a witch can first be bound. Once they are bound, transferring them to another Master is easy. The first of which is only her magical guardian can even offer to sell her. Remember, unlike the Consort Bond, the Concubine Bond is not natural but wizard made. It has all sorts of preconditions which must be met before the bond can form. The Magical Guardian must offer to sell her. If she is part of a Noble House, then there's that magic to consider as well as the Head of House can prevent the sale, regardless of the magical guardian's wishes. There must also be a willing buyer and consideration for the sale. Even then, not all the conditions are met. The contract, whether written or oral cannot be fulfilled unless the witch is of bonding age, that is at least six months past her first menstrual cycle. She must be physically turned over to the seller..."

"But most were not," Harry said. "I merely summon them with the contract or title!"

"True," Hermione said, "but that was not the case with Ginny, was it?"

"No," Harry nodded. "Her Dad sent her to me that day, but the others?"

"Excluding those who were already Concubines when you acquired them, the Trace is how you were able to summon them."

"But some of them didn't have their wands," Harry protested.

"We've learned the Trace isn't on the wand, Harry," Hermione said, "it's on the person. Not only that, for most of us, we don't get the

Trace until we start school. I know I wasn't under it until after I started Hogwarts."

"Oh?"

"Remember the day we first met? I fixed your glasses?"

"With your wand," Harry nodded. "It was really impressive."

"I'd had my wand since Christmas," Hermione said, "and had been learning spells from books since then. I practiced every chance I could get. And, I never got a letter about underage magic. The Trace is an ancient and complex tracking charm places on people, not objects. It detects when the person does magic or when it's done near them, not when the wand does magic, although indirectly that is what it does. It is tied in to their status as a Ward of a Magical Guardian. Once that relationship ends, the Trace is dispelled. But so long as the Trace is in place, the Magical Guardian, Ministry, Schools and such can 'track' the child. And in regards to underage magic it is really vile as children growing up in magical homes don't get letters unless they do magic in a Muggle area. If we live in a Muggle home, any magic detected by the trace is attributed to us."

"You said they put it on you at school?"

"First week," Hermione nodded, "although that's not what they told me at the time. Like everyone else, I had a 'routine' examination by Madam Pomfrey. That's when the spell was performed. She said it was a diagnostic spell, but I've seen enough of them to know she never used that one again."

"I never had an exam," Harry said.

"Ah, but think about it Harry," Hermione replied, "when you were much younger the bad people came whenever you did magic, wherever you did magic and Dumbledore modified your memory. How do you think they found out?"

"But that means...", Harry began angrily.



"I think he put it on you or had it put on you before he even left you at the Dursleys. Remember, you were left there a full day after your parents were attacked. You had to be somewhere else."

"Bastard!" Harry said. "That meddling old bastard!" He took a calming breath. "So the Trace is how we can summon them?"

"I don't really know how it all works, Harry," Hermione shrugged, "but it is part of the bonding requirements. If the Trace is broken, such as when I became your Consort, any Contract to sell me wouldn't be worth the parchment it's written on. But, Combine the Contract by a Magical Guardian, the sale, gaining possession of the witch while she's under the Trace and the Bonding Rite, and she's a Concubine. Arguably, once a young British witch is placed under the Trace she's at risk of being sold until the Trace is dispelled."

"I see, and where were we?" Harry nodded.

"Preconditions to a bond," Hermione said. "It seems Gabrielle has chosen you as a Bond Mate of some kind, but also that the two of you are not bonded."

"That is correct," Fleur said. "Gabrielle has chosen Harry as her Bond Mate and can have no other. But the Bond cannot be completed for some time and then only if Harry and his Consorts agree to it. Remember, Harry, because of our Bond, Consorts control who else you can Bond with or even have relations with."

Harry nodded. Hermione could have vetoed any of the Concubines and Luna for that matter, but it was she who convinced him to bond with them. Luna had the same authority as Hermione once she became his Consort and, while she did select the two Ravenclaws who would join his family, she had approved all the others without much question including Cissy. As a Coven Bond, Cissy also had to be approved by all the others as well, something that did not apply to the Concubines who were yet to join. Harry also knew he was in too deep to get out now. If Hermione and Luna told him to do this, he had no excuse not to.

"How did this happen?" Harry asked. "When?"

"The Second Task," Fleur shrugged. "You saved her life and earned my respect, something which had not happened before with another boy. But more important was when she thanked you. She sensed your magic and knew it fit her perfectly. It of course was also helpful that you were very kind to her, however briefly. And I know how you are concerned about your fame. Don't be. You are famous in Britain, not in France. Before that day, she didn't know of you at all and since then all she knows is what I have told her about you. There are no silly Boy-Who-Lived books in my Country. The War which made you famous barely made our papers."

"A Life Debt?"

"No Harry," Hermione said. "While you did pull her from the lake, it could not have created that Bond as her life was never in danger."

"It did make her pay attention to you," Fleur said, "but Hermione is right. Had you done nothing, she would not have died."

"We didn't know that..."

"True. But the debt is incurred by actually saving the life, not by believing that had happened."

"The only ones who truly owed you a life debt before they bonded to you were Ginny and me," Hermione said. "By bonding to you for life, the debt is fulfilled."

"I understand Ginny," Harry said. "Chamber of Secrets and all, but you? If anything I owe you one for keeping me from doing something stupid! Oh! The Troll."

"Yes, that did incur the debt," Hermione said.

"But Ron was there too! He was the one who knocked the bloody thing out. Does that mean you owe him one two?"

Hermione shook his head. "No Harry. A person can only owe one Life Debt at a time. Moreover, you can't acquire such debt because you

did something that put a person in mortal peril. The reason my life was in danger was because of Ron."

"He didn't let the Troll in..." Harry began.

"No, but he was the reason I was all alone in that bathroom. Moreover, do you honestly think he would have come and looked for me if you hadn't?"

Harry shook his head. "I don't think he would have cast that spell had I not told him to do something."

"Exactly. You were the one who came for me, Harry and you were the one who made sure I was safe. Ron was the reason I was in danger and only did what he did because of you, not me. Even then, even assuming I might have possibly owed him a Life Debt, what happened at the end of Third Year cancelled out the Troll incident. You saved Sirius and me from all those Dementors. Had you not cast your Patronus, we'd be dead most likely. The more recent debt controls."

"So you fell for me..."

"No Harry! It doesn't work that way. The Debt gives you the right to control my life, but can't make me fall in love if that was never in the cards. Pettigrew owes you a Life Debt, after all, and he also was the one who nearly saw you killed by Voldemort."

Harry nodded. "Are you sure Gabrielle isn't...?"

Fleur shook her head. "It is the Bond, Harry. While she is immature magically, Maman and I can perceive her Allure and it has changed into the Bonded Allure. She wants to be your friend, but knows that one day she may be asked to be more than that and she accepts that as what the Fates had decided she should be."

"So why does she need to live here? Why not with you and Bill?"

"She should be with her new family," Fleur said. "It will be years before she'll be anything more than a little girl, but she's already

Bonded to you and it is best for her and her magic to be here. Besides, Bill and I will see her quite frequently, more than I have since she was a baby. That and if I were around all the time, she might not be as motivated to learn her English. She knows a little, but the best way to learn is not from books but from having to use it."

Harry looked at Hermione and she nodded. She did it to him again, he thought. He then looked at Luna.

"The shifts support this," she said, just as she had after Cissy. "It moves you further to the right, not massively but further. The shift for Fleur is far more impressive. I cannot speak about her sister, but I'm pretty sure given Fleur's shift it would be similar. I think you should do this."

"You're not suggesting I should sleep with her?" Harry replied in shock.

"No Harry," Hermione said. "That would be illegal given her immaturity. You will not be expected to take that step until she is a woman who is mature enough to be bonded as a Consort or Concubine."

"Which won't be until she's about sixteen," Fleur said.

"Why that long?" Harry asked. "From what I understand all of my girls were of bonding age by the time they were thirteen, most were even younger! Dora Bonded when she was twelve and one of the girls coming to my House this week is only twelve!"

"They are not Part Veela," Fleur said. "Pure Veela females do not begin the change from child to adult until they're about twenty. Part Veelas begin earlier, but much later than true humans. For me, I was almost sixteen when the changes began. Until then, I was a few centimeters shorter, as we still grow in height, but I still looked like a tall, little girl. School was difficult because I was not as – er – advanced as my classmates. I also had no interest in sex or boys nor any need for such things. Even as Part Veela, we are like witches that way. When we begin to change, we need releases to stabilize our magic. But at fifteen, I was not there yet and was teased

mercilessly for it. Then it began and it was swift. I went from girl to what you see now in four months and it was not comfortable growing that fast or needing a release as often as I did. It will be the same for Gabrielle. She will be taller, but still a girl for some time. Here she can be with those who understand and will not humiliate her for her differences. I wish to spare her the pain and loneliness I experienced in school."

"And what about living arrangements?" Harry asked.

"We were hoping she could use the spare bedroom in Cissy's apartment," Hermione said. "Cissy and I both speak French fluently, but having her room with us might be inappropriate."

"I don't mine, Harry," Cissy said. "It would be nice to teach a child untainted by my ex and his mania."

"And the rest of it?" Harry said. "Under House Rules, she would be technically family."

"Harry, this is a Coven," Hermione said. "When you agreed – and you're so sweet – she became a member as all of the others have already agreed as well."

"I didn't..."

"Are you going to say no?" Luna asked.

"N-no, I suppose not. I'm in too deep as it is. But she's not a member, is she? I can't Bond with her."

"She's more like Betrothed to the Coven," Hermione said. "But she would still be a part of everything not involving sexual intimacy."

"I believe that's my point," Harry said. "It's not like we hide that unless there are guests..."

"She is aware of those things, Harry," Fleur said. "When I was with my family last Thursday to discuss this, we had a long talk with her about what it might be like."

"So you're saying we don't hide it from her?" Harry asked in shock.

"She can leave if she wishes or stay if she wishes, but so long as it's not time for her to be asleep, she should have no more restrictions on where she spends her time than we do," Hermione said. "One day she will be a full part of it. Until then, she can't participate, but we shouldn't treat her like she's otherwise not a part of this. In the end, though, it is her choice about such things. Besides, I don't see that big a deal. I never told you this, but I did walk in on my Mum and Dad when I was about her age and I don't feel totally scarred for life. And this won't be her parents, but her betrothed and his other wives, right?"

"French magicals are more open about sexuality," Fleur said. "While we do not condone it with children, neither do we feel compelled to hide it from them either. She has seen it before although I don't think she is a voyeur. She'll probably be more interested in reading a book. Besides, she is Part Veela. We are not as affected by seeing such things as most."

"Am I the only one who thinks this is off?" Harry asked.

"It would seem so," Cissy said. "I won't say your daughters should be around for our Coven Times, but she is or will be a part of it, not a product of it."

"I suppose," Harry resigned himself. "But on one condition. No one will make or ask her to be there!"

"Thank you, Harry," Fleur said. "You may come in now, Gabrielle."

Harry was stunned. The blonde girl entered in a travelling cloak carrying two magical suitcases and wearing a broad hat. She looked a little taller than he remembered. The girl put her suitcases down and ran over to hug her big sister, jabbering away in French. After a few words, she walked over and hugged Harry.

"Good Afternoon," she said in awkward and accented English, "my 'uzban' to be."

"Er, welcome Gabrielle," Harry said standing just before she ran over and hugged him as well.

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, Cambridge, U.K.

Cho Change was seventeen years old and looking to start her final year at Hogwarts where she was Captain of the Ravenclaw Quidditch Team. Her parents were born in Hong Kong and their parents had fled to Hong Kong in 1949. Her father was a Muggle and owned a business in Glasgow. Her mother was a witch. In China, such unions were hardly unexpected as, at least until 1949 when the magically intolerant communists took over; magic had been quite in the open for as long as their long history could remember. Magicals had been suppressed by the new regime as reminders of their failed, imperialistic past. After six years at Hogwarts, Cho wondered which was worse: the failed Chinese anti-magic campaigns or the Pureblood nonsense here.

Cho was spending the week with her best friend Marietta Edgecrombe. She was what one might call a borderline Pureblood as she had a couple of Muggle Born great-great grandmothers. Under the law, this made her a Pureblood. To the bigots in Slytherin, she was still a Half-Blood. Then again, the only people in school who liked anyone from that House were in that House and even then it was questionable. Marietta thought it was a bunch of nonsense. Then again, she judge a woman based upon their skills in the bedroom and not their bloodlines and had no use for wizards at all. True, Marietta was betrothed to another borderline Pureblood, but Cho knew Marietta would sleep with him to perform her wifely duty of bearing his children and otherwise be with her Witch. Cho was not her witch. Marietta might be that way, but Cho preferred guys when it came to emotional love and romance. Girls were just for the adolescent witch needs and Cho had to admit, Marietta had skills. Marietta was arguably the most experienced Girl Sex Girl at Hogwarts.

Marietta had come to Hogwarts about a month after she had her first period and after having a long talk with her Mum about the needs she would need to deal with now that she was becoming a young woman. Her first night, she had shown the other girls in her dorm what her

mother had shown her, which was how to meet those needs by oneself. But it was clear that first week, Marietta would be a Girl Sex type. While Cho and the others watched in shock at what went on in the upper year dorms, showers and Girls' Loos, Marietta seemed to drool.

Marietta's first time was her second week at school when she offered herself to a Fifth Year and wound up spending that weekend in the Fifth Year dorms as their "Plaything" learning all about how to have sex with girls. She even slept with a couple of them at night, or so she said when she bragged about it when she returned to her own dorm the following week. Neither Cho nor any of her other roommates knew what to make of Marietta at first as none of them felt the urges the girl had yet. The next weekend, Marietta spent with the Seventh Year Girl Sex girls. By Halloween, Marietta proudly told her first years she had shagged every Girl Sex Girl in Ravenclaw and had even gotten lucky and been the first time for a Second Year who wanted to try it too.

It was spring term when one of Cho's other roommates had her first period. By then, thanks to Marietta, they all knew that when that happened, they would need a release frequently. Marietta was more than willing to provide that release. She had been a first time for three Second Years by then and now offered to be her own Year's first time, if they wanted. In September of her Second Year, Cho had reached that point where she needed to be like the older girls and her first orgasm was thanks to Marietta. In fact, Marietta was responsible for every one of her roommates' first times. Cho dreamed of boys whenever she had that kind of sex. She knew Marietta dreamed of girls. She was the first in that room to have a true lover, not just a helping hand or tongue, and that lover was an older girl in their house. While Marietta was available to any girl during the day, bedtime was for her lover who, like Marietta preferred girls to the exclusion of boys in both her dreams and her reality.

As much as Cho enjoyed Girl Sex, she was really into boys. She had a huge crush on Cedric Diggory, who was two years older than her and in another House. She also thought Harry Potter was a real possibility, even though he was a year younger. Cedric, she always figured, was an unattainable fantasy. He'd never notice her. Potter,



on the other hand seemed much more likely, especially on the train for the start of their Fifth Year. That was a bad time in their dorm. Marietta's girl lover was the Second Year Girl she had been with their First Year and she had not returned to Hogwarts following her O.W.L.s. The girl was a Muggle Born and Cho began to note that it seemed that Muggle Born girls were the only ones who seemed to drop out after their O.W.L.s.

For Cho, her love life seemed to improve when Cedric asked her to the Yule Ball. He was a Tri-Wizard Champion, so in addition to having what she thought of as the best looking wizard at the ball as her date, she was also going to be in the spotlight. It was perfect! Cedric even took her on several "dates" leading up to the ball, including a Hogsmeade Weekend to shop for robes. By the night of the Ball, she already could well imagine what Cedric looked like naked, having been close to that with him many times in broom closets and he was almost as good at Girl Sex techniques as any she had experienced. That night, he took her to the Prefects' Bathroom, and she learned that Boy Sex was even better than Girl Sex, four times!

The Winter and Spring Terms had been wonderful as she was with Cedric as often as possible. They even spent their Hogsmeade visits in a room he rented over the Three Broomsticks where they had all the time in the world and no fear of getting detentions! She was sure she was falling in love with him. Then came the final task. When it was over, her wonderful lover was dead.

From a dating standpoint, her sixth year was a disaster. She knew a lot had to do with Cedric's death. She spent a lot of time in Marietta's arms crying about that between their magical therapy sessions. Her only good memory was kissing Harry Potter under the mistletoe following a meeting of the outlawed Dumbledore's Army. Harry asked her out for the Hogsmeade Weekend that followed Valentine's Day and she was certain she was going to end that day as more than just Harry's first kiss. But it wasn't meant to be. He was more interested in meeting up with Granger than in her attempts at seducing him. She was all but ready to give up on boys altogether after that.

She had agreed to spend a couple of weeks with Marietta this summer. She still was not into girls, but needed a good shagging a lot

and no one was better than Marietta. Marietta understood. Cho wanted a real husband. Marietta wanted a real witch, and Cho could never be that for her. But Cho was more than willing to sleep with her as a summer fling and that was fine too.

Cho was lying on the bed dreaming in her post-coital state about a man. Marietta was naked in her arms. Whenever Marietta did that to her, she remembered how good Cedric had been at it and dreamed of finding another man who could push all her buttons, and not just be a substitute for masturbation. Still, it had been a relaxing week with more sex than Cho had ever had, even if it was with just a girl. She learned that Marietta had been invited to join a secret club at the beginning of the summer for witches like her who wanted lovers with the same plumbing. Marietta said it was loads of fun with loads of sex and a few promising possibilities. Cho was happy for her friend, but had no idea what her love life would be like next year.

Suddenly, she felt the need to go to the loo, although it was also very different. She woke out of her half slumber, kissed her sleeping friend on the forehead and walked into the loo across the hall and found herself somewhere very, very different.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

## Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).

## HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black Potter, age 16 (SP-5).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9 (11/23/86). Veela Bond (~6/17/95) (full bond pending.)

## Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).

9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura Carlson, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally Broadmoor, age 14 (Ra-3).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae McDonald, age 14 (Gr-3).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) Bates, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn Faulken, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy Tennyson, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone Tennyson, age 14 (Ra-3).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda Manning, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE: PRANK

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – Office of the Minister for Magic, London, U.K.

In the early morning hours before dawn arose, Kingsley arrived at the Minister for Magic's office. The office was now more of a conference room as there was no real Minister per se. Fudge still held the title, but what governance that was occurring was being done by Scrimgeour. Sunday evening, he had received the list of names from Charenwell via Gringotts post. He knew that only twenty-six were Charenwell witches illegal sold over the past several years, but also knew that Charenwell was planning to double-cross the double-crossers. There were thirty-six names on the list. He had with the list, thirty-six Titles tied to those names so be signed by the owners over the next few days, but also knew that the Titles were charmed to look like mere government form stating that the witch was a Concubine and the signer was their legal owner. It also had a powerful compulsion charm that should ensure the form was signed without question. Gringotts had prepared the charmed Titles, and once signed, a Galleon would be transferred to the Owner's Vault completing the legal sale of their Concubine to RPG Entertainment Services.

When he returned from Charenwell the prior day, he sent O.W.L.s to the few members of the unofficial "Crisis Committee" stating that Gringotts had forwarded the list and requesting an early morning meeting and was pleased that the others of the Committee agreed. There would only be four of them. Fudge and Scrimgeour would be there along with Madam Umbridge. Kingsley knew they would wish to discuss the final details of their infallible plan, but he also had the specific demands regarding transfer that he had worked out with Remus, Harry and several others the day before. It was about half an hour later that the others arrived.

"Well?" Umbridge asked in a tone suggesting she was either impatient or annoyed to be up so early. Kingsley coughed at the thought that she was missing her beauty sleep. He doubted a troll would find her attractive.

"We have the list," he said. "Forty-two names." That, of course was part of the double-double-cross. Only twenty-six were real. Nine others were chosen at random for transport to cover that the tenth was one Martha Graham. It had been decided to convince the Ministry that they had control over all the missing witches.

"Excellent," Umbridge sneered.

"Any of note?" Fudge asked.

"Two belong to you, Sir," Kingsley said. One was a Charenwell witch, the other was not, but both were slated for transport to stick it to the git. "Another to you, Sir," he added looking at Scrimgeour. She was also a Charenwell witch.

"Well," Umbridge said looking at the expression on her colleagues' faces, "I'm sure your playthings are of no moment. We are sending a hit team in their place. That's already decided."

"The transport is conditioned," Kingsley said. "Charenwell demands the true owners sign these statement affirming they own the witch in question," he continued handing two forms to Fudge and one to Scrimgeour. The two men glanced at them.

"Seems straight forward enough," Fudge said as he took out a quill and signed both of his while Scrimgeour did likewise.

"And the others?" Umbridge asked.

"I'm assigning some clerks to get the other signatures today," Kingsley replied.

"While they're at it, perhaps they could collect a hair sample; say it's for identification purposes?"

"From the signer?" Fudge asked confused.

"No, the bint," Umbridge replied. "Polyjuice potion for our hit team."

"I just got here..." Fudge complained.

"You don't have to collect yours," Umbridge said. "I'm sure we could send some age appropriate, reliable Ministry witches and claim they are who we say they are for now. So long as the hair height is close enough, we can use glamours. Surely you can cast such a charm?"

"Of course," Fudge said.

"Now, as to the Assault Force," Umbridge said. "There are twelve I wish to take part."

"What Department?" Fudge asked.

"No Department," Umbridge smiled. "They are private contractors I hire from time to time. Very useful in these kinds of situations."

Kingsley noted that Scrimgeour gave him a glance. Twelve was the standard number of Death Eaters assigned to what the Aurors called a Heavy Assault Team. Neither of them said anything for their own reasons. Scrimgeour, while running things, lacked the political capital to take on Umbridge directly, at least until he officially became Minister. Kingsley could care less. If it was an Assault Team, it would die at the Ward Line and that would mean twelve fewer Death Eaters to hunt down and kill later. He was surprised that given the losses they had sustained in their Assault Teams earlier in the summer that Voldemort was ready to risk another. He was also a little surprised that Umbridge might be connected to the Death Eaters in a way that she could directly or indirectly request such a force. Then again, they might just be mercenary thugs.

"Sounds good," Fudge said. "Are they reliable?"

"Very reliable, Minister," Umbridge smiled.

"Right then, I assume the balance will come from Law Enforcement?"

"Yes Minister," Kingsley said. "It will be a combined team of Aurors, Hit Wizards and Obliviators with a support element attached."



Kingsley had his list. Eight were Muggle Born witches from his Department who were so far down on the food chain he doubted they posed any threat at all. They were being sent in the hopes they'd survive the crossing to get them out of the country. The remaining twenty-two could be a threat. They were also either known Death Eater sympathizers or suspected Death Eaters. Six were from Azkaban Prison and included the Warden. Those six were the only ones who could authorize access to the prison to anyone who was not either a guard or a prisoner and the location of the prison means to authorize access was under a Fidelius Charm, for which the Warden was Secret Keeper. It was the Warden who allowed Umbridge access to a couple of Dementors a year ago, so he had to go. The threat was a mass break out. Few knew, but aside from Black, the only way to get the Death Eaters out required an inside job and Kingsley suspected those six of planning such a job. It was just a gut feeling, until he learned how well the Death Eaters were being treated by another guard.

"Brilliant! Where and when do we end this nonsense?"

"Thursday morning," Kingsley said. "We are to have the witches at a field near Wiltshire where transportation will be provided."

"Perhaps we can get the portkeys..." Umbridge began.

"It won't be portkeys," Kingsley said. "Magical travel is impossible."

"Then how are they getting there?"

"Muggle airplanes," Kingsley replied. "I have been assured that any attempt to try and gain control of them will doom anyone aboard. Our best bet is to stick with the plan. Once our teams are there, it'll be too late for them."

"Could always have a force of broom riders in hiding to follow them," Umbridge thought out loud. "It would increase chances for success if we deploy a larger force."

Assuming they can keep up, Kingsley thought. Even if they could, they'd die at sea. After he returned to his office and sent out people to

obtain the signatures and hair samples, he penned a note to Remus regarding this recent development.

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – Otter St. Catchpole, Devon, U.K.

The man was Oscar Wilde, but being magical raised neither was related to the famous 19th Century author nor had any idea the famed author even existed. He was a mid-level clerk with the Department for Regulation and Control of Magic Creatures where he had worked for nine years following Hogwarts and was now involved in completing what had to be the most bizarre and disturbing "Creature" registration of his entire career. He had a list of ten homes throughout England he had to visit this today and a stack of papers that had to be signed. He did not know what the papers meant, only that they had to do with this Concubine business. Despite being magically raised, until recently he had no idea Wizards kept Concubines and was rather sick to find that out. Apparently, the Ministry was doing something about it and he had to admit it was a more interesting use of his time than dealing with familiars. Still, it just struck him as improper.

He walked up a dirt lane towards the oddest looking farm house he had ever seen. It was obviously magical, as there was no way the seven story building could stand on its own otherwise and without some kind of magical protection he knew it would be an attraction for the Muggles who'd probably have come from miles around to wonder about it. He passed through a white gate and crossed through the front garden to an obvious door. He knocked.

A plump, red haired woman with a stern expression soon appeared. She was wearing an apron and looked like she had been cooking something before he interrupted.

"You here about the divorce?" she asked.

"Er .. what?" he replied confused. "Sorry. No Ma'am. I'm with Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures. According to our records a Ronald Weasley lives here and is the registered master of a Concubine named Martha Graham. Is he in? I have some paperwork he needs to sign for our files."

"Well," she said, "no idea what the whore's name is, but he's my son and he has one. RONALD? GET OFF YOUR SLAG AND GET DOWN HERE NOW! I swear that boy's gonna shag it off," she finished with a disgusted mutter. "You need to see the bitch too?"

"I am supposed to check on their condition if convenient," he nodded.

"AND THROW SOME CLOTHES ON HER AND BRING HER WITH YOU!" she called back into the house.

Sometime later, a tall, lanky red haired teenage boy arrived looking like he had just thrown something on followed by an older, blonde woman who looked to be in her twenties. He looked confused and she had no emotion on her face.

"You Ronald Weasley?" Oscar asked.

"Yeah," he said sullenly before being wacked in the head by the red haired woman.

"Yes Sir," she hissed. "He's from the ministry about your Bint!"

"Yes Sir," the boy sighed. "What's this about? I go you all the paperwork."

"Just a final bit here to confirm everything," he said. "You need to sign this form stating she is your Concubine Martha Graham and you are her Master. Also need a strand of her hair for our records."

The boy looked at the form. "Fine," he said. Oscar handed him a quill and the boy signed. He then summoned a strand of hair from the blonde and placed it in a vial with her name on it before returning everything to his bad.

"Thank you for your time and cooperation," he said. "Good day." He then turned and left for the next location on his list.

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell, U.K.

Cho Chang was standing with four other girls who like her had been one place only moments ago and now were wherever this was. A young woman named Dora was apparently waiting for them with a pile of robes in her arms. Cho was thankful her hers seeing has she had arrived here still naked from Marietta's bed, although she had no idea what the "N" on hers meant. The other girls were all younger than she was. A girl named Erin whom she had never seen before was wearing a robe with an "H" on it. Wanda Parker had been a Gryffindor Second Year, although Cho did not remember her. She had a "B" on her robe. Megan Albright and Alice McGregor had also been Second Years, both in Hufflepuff and they wore robes with and "F" and a "G" on them respectively. Aside from Cho, the others were dressed and did not need robes. None of them knew why they were here.

She heard voices coming from the stairs and saw a young man, four women and a girl coming down. She recognized some of them, although even they looked different. She scampered towards them hoping they might clue her in about what was going on.

"Harry? Hermione?" she asked desperately.

"Hello Cho," Luna said to her with a smirk.

"What's going on?" Cho asked, noticing that Hermione and two of the others were whispering to the girl in what sounded like French. She understood little, but was surprised when the blonde girl began to blush and giggle looking at her.

"Professor McGonagall will tell you," Harry said formally. "Now if you'd please get back with your group."

"And what are you doing?"

"His Highness has a matter of state to attend to," the oldest of them said formally.

"His ... His what?"

"It shall be explained," the older woman finished with a tone indicating that the conversation was over. Harry and the others walked past the group near the Dora woman and, while Cho wanted to follow, Dora would not allow it. "This way ladies," she said to Cho and the others, leading them off in a different direction.

"Picked the wrong moment to come downstairs," Harry noted when they were far enough away from the new arrivals. He actually had little idea where they were going either. Ever since the Time Turning began, he relied upon his three minders regarding his schedule and decided that unless there was a really good reason for it, it was easier to go with the flow of things. He knew he would be having lunch with these ladies and that after lunch he would be heading to Government House to tape a broadcast that would air on Charenwell Television the next real day regarding the Concubine articles, the need for all the construction, the request made of their Country by Her Majesty's government regarding the Troubles in Magical Britain and announcing the formation of an Army and Air Force, the first formal call to Arms since the Napoleonic Wars (those who had served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces since then had all be volunteers and not part of a specific Charenwell muster.)

They entered one of the many (it seemed) Parlors on the floor. It had been converted into a nice dining room and there were two older people waiting for them at the circular dining table. Those two rose. One was an older woman who was tall, lithe and looked like an older version of Fleur. The other was a short, plump, balding man with a friendly expression on his face.

"Maman! Papa!" Gabrielle called out and ran to hug the coupled. Harry noted the girl's expression was not what he expected. She had just been "given away" to his family and should look confused, hurt or something like that, but Gabrielle had a very relaxed smile on her face as she whispered something to her mother in French, earning a bemused look at Harry and a chuckle from the mother.

"Mother? Father?" Fleur said in English, "may I present his Highness, Lord Sir Harry the First, Duke of Charenwell; Her Highness Lady Dame Hermione, Duchess of Charenwell; Her Grace, Lady Dame

Luna, Countess of Darby and Madam Black, Executive Assistant to the Duke."

The two visitors bowed formally.

"Harry?" Fleur continued, "Our father, His Excellency Philippe Delacour, French Minister for Magic and our mother, Madam Apolline Delacour."

"It is a pleasure, but also a surprise," Harry said shaking hands with Mr. Delacour. "And I see now where your daughters inherited their charm and beauty," he added, kissing the mother's hand as he had been taught.

"We arrived via Gringotts," Mr. Delacour said, "Your Highness."

"Please, just Harry," Harry replied. "Every time I hear that I feel like such a fraud. I apologize in advance, but I don't speak French. Hermione and Cissy do, but Hermione would say seeing as I barely speak the Queens English, it would be a lot to expect me to know another language. Shall we sit?"

"Thank you," Mr. Delacour said. "And do not be concerned. My wife and I are comfortable with English and Fleur's is coming along. Gabrielle understands quite a bit, but is not comfortable speaking it."

The group took their seats at the table. Some elves brought in the first Lunch Course. Cissy explained it would be a long lunch, in terms of time and the courses would be wildly spaced so there would be plenty of time to converse. "Gringotts you say?" Harry asked.

"Indeed," Mr. Delacour said. Harry knew the Bank had its own floo system having used it before. "As you may know, certain government officials may use their wonderful system with their permission. It is quite convenient for informal or clandestine meetings such as this where one does not want the press or much of the government knowing. It was interesting to learn that your branch will only allow access from countries with which you have diplomatic relations."

"I was unaware of even that, but it makes sense," Harry said. "I'm still rather new to all of this, Sir. I am somewhat surprised Ambassador DeVille is not with you." Marcel DeVille was the Ambassador to Charenwell from Magical France.

"We are here primarily for private issues," Mr. Delacour said. "Any discussions we have regarding the current state of international affairs are purely private and off the record. Just as you cannot bind Charenwell without going through appropriate channels, I cannot similarly bind France. Through my Ambassador and Foreign Office, I have been advised you have been engaged in talks with the British Muggle government."

Harry nodded. "We have maintained almost continuous relations with them for ... well dating back to the colonization of this country in the seventh century. They have asked for our advice and maybe assistance with their magical problems."

"And the Statute of Secrecy?"

"Communication and coordination with the Muggle Authorities is not in violation," Hermione said. "The exposure of our world to the general population at large is. Almost every representative we have met with knew about magic even before they knew about this country. As for this country itself..."

"No one is here who does not know," Harry said. "In our case it is easier just to hide the country, rather than deal with the complexities of hiding within one."

"And magical Britain?"

"We have never maintained diplomatic relations with them. As head of two Ancient and Noble Houses, I control a large block in their Wizengamot, but that is based upon my ancestral holdings in England, not my position as Duke. Charenwell was never a part of England or Magical Britain, or at least never in a legal sense, and not at all since 1217. Magical Britain is a major export market and many of our people attended school there, many of them remaining there, but as we believe their authority is and has always been derived from

the Crown just as ours is, we do not consider them a government with whom we need consult and more than the County Authorities in Devon need to consult with those in Lancashire."

"I have been fully briefed," Mr. Delacour said. "Your country is unlike any in our world that I am aware of."

"Our situation, I've learned, is probably unique," Harry agreed.

"So, do you consider yourself a vassal of the Muggle Crown?"

"No more than Canada would," Harry said. "The ancient pledges of my Ancestors, at least from 1217 onward, are to the defense of the Realm, which was understood then to mean England, not the Empire. Her Majesty's government is aware that this has always been our interpretation of our relationship. Since 1217, our involvement in the affairs of England – aside as being the traditional magical advisor – has been most limited. We sent troops to fight Napoleon and allowed and encouraged enlistments for the two World Wars. Any other involvement has been by the individual and not by this government."

"And the events of July 10th?"

"The Will reading," Hermione replied.

"That was almost two weeks before I spoke with any member of Her Majesty's government," Harry replied. "Aside from the Concubine issue, which had been a policy objective of the Lord Mayor for years, all else was in my private capacity as Heads of two Ancient and Noble Houses."

"You created quite a mess there."

"One way of seeing things," Harry smirked.

"Oh?"

"In my personal opinion, all I did was expose a mess that was created long before I was born. That system is rotten to its core. I found



myself in position to legally give it a nudge, and the whole thing seems to have collapsed for now."

"And you do not fear reprisals?"

"They are attempting such," Harry said confidently. "It will fail spectacularly."

That was not bravado, Mr. Delacour thought. He might be but a lad, but he's not one to trifle with. "I see," he said. "Much of what you've said my Ambassador has reported. He is concerned about your – er – cooperation with the Muggles, but that's because most of our governments no longer have any relations with the Muggles. I would agree your situation is unique and shall leave it at that. Personally, I am pleased you were able to stick it to the English Wizards. For far too long they have been arrogant and most uncooperative with the rest of Europe and the I.C.W. You are aware that following July 10th and Dumbledore's ouster from his I.C.W. post, the I.C.W. has ordered an audit of that government?"

"No sir," Harry conceded. "To be honest, I've been spending this summer trying to learn more than I've probably learned in my life about a lot of things. Not much of a Holiday really. My focus has been Charenwell and Her Majesty's concerns about what might happen if the Troubles there in Britain are not contained. I know little or nothing about magical Europe other than it is out there."

"And what is your opinion of what had been happening in Magical Britain?" Mrs. Delacour asked.

Harry gave a lengthy assessment of what he thought about the Pureblood Supremacists, Voldemort and the Death Eaters and the Magical Government. "It sounds very pessimistic," he said. "I would say that most people there are not that way. Unfortunately, they are not the ones in control of anything."

"Do you think the situation there can be resolved through aggressive diplomacy?" she pushed.

"No." Harry said quickly. "That government is by the Purebloods and for the Purebloods. Voldemort and his ilk are only taking that idea a step further, really. Over eighty percent of the population doesn't qualify as Purebloods by any definition, including me. And I can trace my family magic back at least as far as the First Century. The British Magicals are not governed, they are robbed. You were elected to your post, were you not Your Excellency?"

"I was, and you're right. I do feel a bit out of place with that title. Phillip is fine."

Harry smiled. "Who or how were you elected?"

"General Election," he replied. "Anyone of age could vote. The same is true for our Chamber of Deputies, which is our Wizengamot."

Harry nodded. "Same is true here in Charenwell. I was not elected, but I am not the government. In Britain, the Wizengamot 'elects' the Minister for Magic. Those seats are hereditary. The laws and customs all but prohibit anyone from rising in the government who is not either tied to a Wizengamot family or a Pureblood. Again, that means the vast majority have no say in their own government. And the government controls or tries to control everything and spends its time staying in control. Nothing short of revolution or war will solve the problem."

"And what do you propose?"

"In a manner of speaking, both," Harry said. "Her Majesty has asked for our help. She wants someone to deal with the problem and is understandably reluctant to make this a Muggle versus magical thing. But since the magicals are either unwilling or unable to fix it themselves, it's a bit of a fix. I am planning to raise a (mostly) magical force to do what should be done."

"And your government approves?"

"In concept," Harry said, "particularly as I am paying for it, not them. But saying it is not going to get it done. Charenwell has never gone to war really and I doubt they'll be lining up to join just because I ask."

For now, the Concubine issue is the only one that affects any of them directly and the way to solve that problem going forward is not to send our children to their country for school, which we are working on. On the other hand, there are thousands in Britain who might just jump at such a chance, particularly if their families are out of the line of fire. Her Majesty's government is going to assist us in evacuating thousands from Britain to here, namely those most at risk in the current Troubles. I expect the majority of any force we can build will be British in origin, not Charenwellian."

"And what do you have right now?" Mr. Delacour asked.

"Nothing."

"Nothing? Hit wizards?"

"None."

"Obliviators?"

"None. No need for them here."

"Aurors?"

"The Lord Mayor and three others were trained British Aurors, but aside from then none. If action will be taken, we are a long way from taking it. What we have been doing is trying to see that it all doesn't go to Hell before we are ready."

"Mon Deux! It is worse than I thought! Magical Europe might be able, but it lacks the political will to do so and so long as the problem remains across the Channel, it's not going to change. You have the will, but the rest of Charenwell might not. You rely on forces you don't have drawn mostly from people not even here?"

Harry shrugged. "Two months ago, I never even heard about this place. I'd say I've managed to get a lot started in little time. But even if things go smoothly, we're looking and 1998 at the earliest before anything significant can be done."

"Is there anything you could do now more damaging than you are?"

"Not without hardship for my people and certainly not without widespread international support," Harry said. "We supply between seventy and eighty percent of the food and potions supplies for Britain. There is very little we actually buy from them. Our imports are mainly from Europe and Muggle Britain. But our exports are a huge part of our income, so to embargo them, as we could, it would be painful for us without other markets. And even then an embargo will not be effective if someone else comes along to take over that market. Still, they know we can do it which, combined with the fact that a controlling number of Wizengamot votes now live here and will not issue a proxy, is why they seem to be in such a panic."

"So you are not exactly unarmed as it were," Mr. Delacour said.

"Not exactly."

"Thank you for your explanation, although it merely confirmed what I had already been told. Now on to I hope less distressing matters, my daughter Gabrielle. Fleur did tell you she chose you as her Bond Mate and what that means?"

"Yes Sir."

"It is a bit much," the father replied. "Apolline was much older when she chose me as was Fleur with her Bill. I learned of this a year ago in March, which was when the choice was apparent to my wife. Veela Bond or not, she still is our Baby and to learn I must – er – offer her at such a young age... It is rare for one so young, but not unheard of."

"I can imagine, Sir," Harry said.

"Apolline told me the old custom. When one so young chose to Bond, she was sent to live in the home of the chosen Bond Mate. Far more often than not, this allowed the Bond Mate the time to get comfortable with the idea. It of course helps that she is too young and immature to attract the wrong kind of attention from you, yes? That is, you do not lust over little girls, no?"

"I find that thought revolting," Harry said. "And it's not like I need a witch for that kind of company. I already have twenty-one with four more due to bond this week before it's all said and done."

Gabrielle said something to her mother. "She says there were five young women waiting when you reached the ground floor who she could see were unbonded," Apolline said. "We with Veela blood can sense a magical bond like that."

"One of them is joining Bill and Fleur," Harry said. "Three are for other homes. Only one is joining my family today."

Gabrielle spoke again. "The one who spoke to you?" Apolline translated.

"No," Harry said, "one of the others. That one knows me, but both I and Luna felt she was a better fit elsewhere."

Gabrielle's mother translated again. "And where were they being taken? Gabrielle saw them being led off."

"One of my wives was a Professor for most of them at school," Harry said. "Most if not all have no idea what has happened to them. They are being told they are now to become Concubines and hopefully they will accept what has happened. So far, whatever Minerva has been telling them has worked. Most of the girls who have joined the families have accepted, if not fully embraced this new life."

"Accepted? Embraced?"

"By accepted I mean something called the Love Bond, wherein they willingly choose to be a part of the family. So far all of my Concubines have accepted and are Love Bonded and officially Potters or Blacks. In the other houses, maybe one or two of the newest ones have yet to take that step and retain their maiden names. We expect that to change within a few weeks at the most. As for embraced? The final step in that Bond, the one that makes it as permanent as a Consort, is to bear your Bond Mate's child. Of my nineteen Concubines, four are pregnant and eight so far have permission, meaning they may well be in the next month or so. Five have said they will ask by early

next year at the latest. One agrees with me she's too young and should wait until at least next summer. Arguably, they've all embraced it in theory."

"Fleur?" Apolline asked.

"As of Friday, Bill had bound thirteen to him as Concubine," Fleur said. "All but the last has taken the Love Bond, and the last will possibly today. Three are pregnant, five have permission. Two may ask as early as January. The rest are much younger and it may be summer or next winter before Bill will entertain that request."

"The other families are comparable," Hermione added.

"This is good to know," Apolline said. "Mature Concubine Bonds are both the sign of a healthy emotional environment and a wonderful wizard husband. I'm told in the east, where such houses are encouraged, should a wizard have several mature Concubine bonds, he soon finds daughters being offered to him so that they may have such a life. Although I'm sure it is different here."

"Is it?" Harry half joked. "Are you not doing the same?"

Fortunately Apolline realized he was joking at least a little. "Not exactly the same. Her Bond formed before any of this. But yes, I can see what you are saying. I can also sense your discomfort. Be assured, we would not do this now if Fleur did not hold you in high regard, Harry. But she does, as does Gabrielle. As bright as Gabrielle is, she is but a child still. It is Fleur's impression that was persuasive. As parents, as hard as it is to part with our children, in the end it is and always will be our duty to see to their happiness and help them attain all they can in life. What is best for Gabrielle both for her present safety and future happiness is to live here. If you are not willing to let her live with your family now, she still will remain with her sister. But living as part of your family increases the likelihood you will accept her and bind her to you in time. Since she has chosen you, it is in her best interest that you choose her as well when she is old enough. As a plural marriage is clearly not offensive to you..."

"I have already agreed she will live here," Harry said, "provided she does so with your blessing."

"And she has it," Apolline said.

"While Fleur says this is not an issue," Harry said, "I need to know. Aside from Gabrielle, I will have twenty-five women who need or deserve physical intimacy. Nineteen are at the age when they need such services more than once a day. I do my best to see to all of their needs daily and only come close because of my family Time Turner (which given everything else I would needs anyway even if it was just Hermione and me). Discretion in such things has been unnecessary for the most part and is quite inconvenient. If she lives here, exposure to such things at least as a witness will be unavoidable. I can understand if..."

"The same problem would exist if she were will Fleur, no?" Apolline asked.

"I suppose it will."

"And she will not be in your bed at night no?"

"She'll have her own room."

"It may embarrass her at first, but it is the life she chose," Apolline said. "I would suggest you make no new arrangements. She is Veela and such things are not as uncomfortable as they might be otherwise."

He looked at Mr. Delacour. He was actually hoping they would be upset. Only Cissy had seemed reluctant about that aspect of things as he was when they spoke earlier. Hermione and Luna did not always get their way. But that only happened when Harry and most of the others disagreed with them and could change their minds.

"Harry," Mr. Delacour said, "when it comes to what is best for my daughters as part-Veela, I defer to Apolline. And Gabrielle as part-Veela already knows certain facts of life and love, at least in the academic sense."

Harry shook his head and looked at his watch. "If that is so, then you should be aware that in an hour there will be a Bonding with a new Concubine. I won't be attending this time through this day, but I will be there as well. And please don't ask. It's my third week of Time Turning and I'm still confused by it all. Anyway, you do know what acts are part of the ritual?"

"Yes," Apolline said.

"Our custom here is far more elaborate. I could do the basic Bonding in as little as an hour or less, but we don't do that. For us, I do the Bonding at least twice, once with the new girl and once with another. I will also be with at least four others before dinner and the new girl again as well and sometimes more. All my women are present to bear witness and most if not all participate in their own ways once the new girl is initially bonded. Should she be considered family now, as one of the witches, she would be expected to be there to bear witness as well, although given her youth that would be all. Basically, she'll get an eyeful."

"It is your home, Harry," Apolline said. "And as of now, she is your betrothed."

Yet another attempt and normalcy had failed. "Very well, but she doesn't have to watch or even be there if she doesn't want to," Harry resigned. "Cissy?"

"Yes Harry?"

"Can you see Gabrielle to her room and get her settled in?"

Cissy nodded.

"We should get ready too," Hermione said. The Gabrielle ran to hug her mother and said something in French to which Apolline replied. Gabrielle then smiled at Harry and followed the other three witches from the room.



"She's not sad," Apolline said. "She's just never been away from home and wanted more time to say goodbye. I told her we are spending a few days here and will see her tomorrow. Her Papa has meetings with your Lord Mayor and his people."

"Thanks," Harry said. "I don't want you to think that I..."

"You've been quite gallant under the circumstances," Apolline said. "The Veela Bond can make mistakes. In Gabrielle's case, I think she did quite well for herself. Now we can speak about more important matters."

"Oh?"

"Can we visit her?"

"Just let us know when you're coming. Of course."

"Do you require a dowry or such?" Mr. Delacour said. "A fund for clothes and education?"

"That won't be necessary," Harry replied.

"And last, school. Fleur said she could attend here?"

Harry nodded.

"When?"

"The school here at the Manor is our first and for now is for the witches in the large families like mine. There are six other families like mine with at least one witch who has not finished school and we felt that because of our rather unique nature, we should learn here. After all, several female students will be noticeably pregnant by Christmas, which might be of some concern if they went to school with others from more – er – normal circumstances. Our regular school we hope to open by next fall, sooner if we can. Regardless, the ladies who live here at the Manors will attend here. And, as we have no laws regarding underage magic and such, I don't see why she could not start when we do here..."

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – "Longbotttom Lake," Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Fortunately, the weather was warm as all Cho was wearing was the robe. Penelope Clearwater was leading her along a lake to a group of people sitting under an oak tree. Penelope had been a Fourth Year Ravenclaw when Cho started Hogwarts and was one of Cho's friend Marietta's first girl shags their first year. Penelope was also the roommate of Marietta's lost lover. After McGonagall's lecture, Cho was now fairly certain what happened. Marietta's lover was a Muggle Born sold at Auction just as Cho apparently had been. Penelope was sold the same year, which explained a lot. When she came back for Sixth Year, Penelope dropped off the Girl Sex radar. She had been a pretty easy lay, as Cho recalled, meaning if you had a need and she was around she would be more than willing to take you for a roll in the hay. It also explained why Penelope and Percy became an "item" given that Penelope hated the boy and had hexed him more than once for inappropriate advances the year before during Prefect rounds. Sixth year, those two were famous for being caught naked in classrooms by other couples looking for a quite space. It was amazing they never got caught by someone who could dock points or such.

Cho was nervous. In some ways, this was a good thing, she thought. Here was a boyfriend who was not going to leave her! On the other hand, whoever he was, he was not hers along. Penelope assured her he was amazing, but Cho decided to judge that for herself. They finally reached the group under the tree.

She knew the boy from the D.A. and he was probably one of the few she might have considered dating had he had the courage to ask. Neville smiled at her and she smiled shyly back. He was tall and had grown into quite a young man, she thought. She decided to go for it and walked up to him and kissed him soundly. He returned the kiss and it blew her away! She did not know why, but it did and she forgot all about Cedric and Harry even before Neville recited the oath. She didn't even hear that clearly, except she knew it meant she was his forever. As soon as the oath was finished, she took off her robe without being told and walked over to him, kissing him again as she

began to undress him, wanting to see her new and forever lover as he was seeing him.

What he did to her was amazing! She never even wanted Cedric that bad! She didn't care she had to share because sharing the best was still getting the best. She had him in her mouth again before he even finished asking and was determined to have him over and over again before this was done if he'd let her. She never enjoyed doing this with Cedric, but for some reason doing this with Neville was amazing. Although it was nothing compared to when he made her his forever and she finally learned that the term Mind Blowing Orgasm might actually understate the perfect experience!

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell, U.K.

It was Harry's third time through the day and he was having lunch in the Second Floor Dining Room with several of his witches. He was still opposed to the idea of Gabrielle being too involved with any of what he viewed as their more adult activities. He understood the reasoning from both Apolline and Hermione. Gabrielle would be a part of that life and they should not change their life for just one person, at least under these circumstances. But she should not be confined to her room or kicked out of a room just because her future Coven members and/or Harry were getting frisky. She was, after all his betrothed and not his child. But she still was a child and he was not at all certain it was appropriate for her to attend a Bonding. He was certain she should not be forced to do so. It was different for the others as he was already bonded to them as they were to him. Gabrielle was different in that regard as well as he was not bonded to her at all and would not be for some time. He hoped someone other than him would see reason.

"Harry?" an accented voice said and he looked up from his lunch. "Is zis time sing?" Gabrielle asked.

Harry understood that and smiled. "The Harry downstairs just now was two days ago for me."

"Oh," she said and then said something to Cissy who was standing near her.

"She asks if she has to go to the Bonding," Cissy said with concern. "She understands we should not change our lives for her as she is or will be one of us, but she'd be more than happy to be elsewhere this afternoon."

Harry sighed and smiled. "I will not make you attend, Gabrielle. Your Bond is different than the others. Were you older like your sister and I bonded to you, it would be another matter. No. You don't have to attend unless you want to. The bonding is in the Library on the Ground Floor. The Third Floor is House Longbottom and we don't go there unless invited. Anywhere else is okay and will be free of naked people."

"Merci!" she said hugging Harry and then a flurry of French.

"Everyone! Listen up!," Harry said. "I have someone you need to meet," he said indicating Gabrielle.

"You're adopting now?" Parvati said half jokingly.

"Er, no," Harry replied. "This is Gabrielle Delacour. She's Fleur's younger sister and – well – she's part Veela and has somehow Bonded to me because of that."

"That's just sick, Harry," Katie said with disgust.

Gabrielle said something very loud and very French.

"The Veela Bond does not require sex to bond the Veela to her wizard, only to bond him to her," Cissy translated in part.

"You left out the bit where she called Katie a cow," Connie said with a chuckle.

"You speak French?" Harry asked.

Connie nodded. "I'd like to think I have talents with my clothes on as well," she teased.

"Anyone else?"

Apparently Sally-Anne and Karen did as well. Neither admitted to fluency, but they spent a lot of time there.

"Cissy?" Harry asked. "We need to find out if any of the others speak French."

Cissy nodded.

"Right then," Harry said, "I'm sure Hermione will be able to explain this new wrinkle in my weird life better than I can, but Gabrielle is Part-Veela like her sister and they can – ah – detect, I guess, their ideal mate. I guess they might be able to ignore it," he said as Gabrielle nodded in agreement, "but if they choose to accept that wizard as their ideal mate, then it's that wizard or no one. Apparently they can detect it quite young," he added with a blush. "If they accept that wizard as an ideal mate, well I guess they are bonded to him even if he has no idea. Apparently that's what happened. Gabrielle's magic detected I was ideal for her, and now I am the only one for her. Her Mum and Fleur confirmed this."

"So you have to bond with her?" Katie said. "But she's just a girl!"

"Pretty sick," Parvati agreed.

"No I don't," Harry said. "No I don't. If I don't, there is no other man for her ... ever, much like your current situations. However, if I choose to, it can't be now any way because, as Katie observed, she's just a girl. None of you would be here if you were not young women and I can't bond with her until she is which won't be for some time."

"A long time," Mallory said. "Part Veela's are late bloomers."

"Fleur was almost sixteen when..." Harry blushed. "So we're talking six years if Gabrielle is like her older sister. Oh, and be advised she might not speak English, but she understands it."

"So she's bonded with you, yet you can't bond with her for several years?" Connie said. "But, she can't be truly happy in life if you don't accept that bond?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Guess we know where this is going," Padma said. "So she's here for an introduction to her future family?"

"Bloody 'Saving People Thing,'" Parvati chuckled. "You took us all because you knew we would not have a chance at happiness otherwise most likely, so you'll be taking her in as well when the time comes?"

"I'll be bonding with her when that time comes. She's here now because she's the daughter of the French Minister for Magic, her older sister is here and her parents feel she'll be safer here than in France."

"So she's staying with Fleur and her Coven?" Padma asked. "Bit young for that don't you think?"

Gabrielle said something. "She's staying here?" Connie exclaimed. "We're her new family now?"

Harry shrugged. "I have spoken with her parents. They know what we are – for the most part – and don't have a problem. You know I won't turn her away when the time comes given what we know. That means this will be her home and they said it would be better for her to be with the family she'll spend the rest of her life with."

"So if you're not bonded to her, what is her status?" Karen asked.

"Betrothed," Harry said nervously.

"In Britain he could have demanded she move here," Cissy said. "Certainly after she was old enough to reproduce, but he could have demanded at any time had he paid a Bride Price for her. He didn't. But her family could also demand he take her in at any time."

"So what's that mean for us?" Katie asked. "I was getting used to the spontaneity."

Gabrielle said something. "She doesn't feel we should change what we do just because of her," Connie said. "Still, not sure I can jump Harry if she's in the same room."

"Compromise," Harry said. "If she's there, we can move to another room. But otherwise, no changes. If she walks in on that, it's her problem, okay?"

"Fair enough," Padma said.

"What if we don't care, hypothetically speaking?" Parvati asked.

Harry smirked. What he had learned about Parvati suggested she probably would not care who saw them. "I guess then if the people in question don't care, it falls into the same category of if she walked into the room. However, I would care as I don't think she should have to watch."

"And bondings?"

"She's not fully bonded because I'm not bound to her," Harry said. "I will not say she can't be there, but she does not have to be there. And she has asked if she could skip it today."

The girls nodded.

"No problems here," Mallory said.

Harry rolled his eyes. "Why do I get the idea that Hermione and Luna were pranking me when they made it seemed she had to be at the bondings?"

"Cause they probably were," Cissy said.

Gabrielle was then introduced to the others at this lunch. Present were Rhonda, Katie, Padma and Sally-Anne Potter and Mallory, Karen, Connie and Parvati Black. Harry had lunch with the others the

day before in the First Floor Dining Room. For him it was the day before. For them it was right now. Once the introductions were over, Cissy led Gabrielle to her new room while Harry and the others finished their lunch.

Harry stood outside the closed doors to the Library with the growing number of his ladies. They were all dressed in just their short robes and slippers while Harry was dressed in shoes, slacks and a polo shirt, just as always before a bonding. They had gathered like this for some time now, several bondings, certainly since Tabatha's. In the Library, the new arrival named Erin Sullivan was getting the second part of her Talk. This time it was from Kathryn O'Fallon who in addition to being her Cross-bonder turned out to be the new girl's roommate from their school in Ireland. It seemed to help if at least one person you knew from your old life was here to see you through this and it was even better if they were your friend, Harry had observed. When he had learned Erin and Kathryn were close friends, he was comfortable about today. The Gabrielle prank had turned what could be an easy Bonding into a nightmare for Harry. He knew enough to know Erin would be in no frame of mind to care that much about an almost ten year old girl being present, but her repressed state would not affect his state of mind. He saw Hermione and Luna.

"Where's Gabrielle?" Luna asked.

"She asked if she could stay away from this and I said it was okay," Harry replied. She noted both girls gave him a smile. "It was a test, wasn't it?"

They nodded. "Fleur's idea. We told her you wouldn't say 'No' to us, but she was looking more for your reaction. It was clear you didn't want Gabrielle to become that involved this young. Had you been less disgusted, Gabrielle would be staying at Fleur and Bill's. While she is of the opinion that we should not totally change our lives just for her given she is now destined to become one of us, she was hoping for a modicum on discretion. Your reaction showed her there will be just that."

"Damn straight!" Harry said.



"Where is she?" Luna asked.

"Dany is helping her unpack her things and set up her room," Cissy said. Dany was the elf maiden assigned to Cissy and her apartment. "She can speak French, so Gabrielle has someone to talk to. We'll see her at dinner when she can meet the others. I asked Dany to start telling her some about the history here and maybe show her around the Manor, aside from the Library, of course."

"Thanks Cissy."

"A question," Cissy asked. They could tell it was directed at all three of them. "Now that I'm not the odd one out, could I be assigned to a House?"

Harry looked at Hermione and Luna who nodded.

"You're already a Black," Harry said. "I see no reason to change that. Do you Luna?"

"Not at all," Luna said. "Moves her more to the right and we blondes have more fun!"

"That means Gabrielle will be a Potter then?" Hermione asked. "I think that's a wonderful idea."

"She'd want to be a Potter," Cissy said. "Not because of anything you don't like. But the boy who saved her when he did not have to in that lake was a Potter and not a Black."

"Thanks Cissy. Now, are we ready yet?"

"All here," Padma said brightly.

"I'll be glad when this is all over with," Harry said. "Don't get me wrong. I've enjoyed all the Bondings. But every other day is a bit much."

"They are fun," Hermione said, "but your right. We all have loads to do."

"Let's do this then," Harry said, "or rather her."

Hermione giggled a bit and nodded to Luna who opened the door to the Library and led in the Coven for Erin Sullivan's Bonding with Harry following in after a couple of minutes.

MONDAY, AUGUST 5th, 1996 – The Alps

Charlie Weasley awoke hoping the previous night had been a dream. He was in his small two room cottage with his Consort Tatiana. Charlie was twenty-three and worked as a researcher at a dragon preserve in Romania and had done well for himself. There was not a lot of money in Dragon research or such sciences, but he had published far more articles than any of his peers had was now considered one of the bright young stars in the field. It was his work that brought then eighteen year old Tatiana to Romania about a year ago. She graduated near the top of her class from one of the best Russian Schools of Magic and wanted to apprentice with a world renowned magical naturalist. Ordinarily, someone like Charlie would not have been considered as such. Newt Scamander was still the best, but he never took students fresh out of school. But Charlie's work with Dragons made him a leader in that field, so she left her home in St. Petersburg (it had been Leningrad when she was younger) and sought out the young Dragon man.

Fortunately, there was an opening at the Reserve and the idea of having an Apprentice intrigued Charlie. She was smart, hard working, logical and extremely pretty and they got along. When working in Dragon country, one needed to get along with their partner. In time, they fell for each other and on March 15th, she became his Consort in what was now their cabin in the forest. Now that he thought about it, he probably should have written his parents about this. The truth was he was terrible about that sort of things. He too easily forgot about writing when there was so much work and observations to report. Now he at least wished he had because he knew he was probably going to die with Tatiana and no one would know they were married.

The Romanian Dragon Reserve was home to several Dragon colonies representing five species in "semi-wild" confinement, all

native to the region, and ten other non-native species in "close confinement" not unlike a zoo. The "semi-wild" species required careful control to keep them both from causing trouble and from being seen by Muggles. Charlie had worked hard on less forceful and more humane methods and was getting results. Dragon kills had dropped notably. Still, one species worried him: the Hungarian Horntails.

In addition to being the largest and most dangerous of the dragons, they were also very smart. Most Dragon Keepers thought little of the intelligence of their charges, but Charlie knew they were intelligent. Most other species were somewhat solitary. Even in favored nesting sites, they ignored others of their kind. Horntails, however, were both communal and had a noticeable social structure, Charlie had noted. There was an Alpha and then the rest. He knew the key to keeping the Horntails in line was keeping the Alpha content. Against his advice, others at the reserve had captured the Alpha for use in that damnable tournament and he knew the Alpha was not a happy dragon, if for no other reason than it had disappeared not long after returning from the Tournament. As Charlie could not identify a new Alpha in the flock, he knew the original was alive. But that also meant it was off the reserve and that worried him.

Not long after sunset, as he and Tatiana were enjoying dinner, all hell broke loose. His cabin was in a small village where many of the Dragon Keepers lived (at least the ones who were either single or had no children.) Many spent their evenings in the tavern before heading home. Suddenly, there were flames everywhere and screams. Charlie and Tatiana rushed outside to see cabins and the tavern in flames and the obvious shape of several horntails in the sky with flames falling upon the village. Charlie had heard about this. Old books called it a rampage and it was apparent he was the only one who knew what to do when he saw several spells shoot into the air. The fools thought they could hold their ground! The only thing to do was run! He grabbed his wife and they headed for the woods. They never made it.

He looked out the next evening. He was on a wide ledge on the side of a high cliff. His wife was in his arms and amazingly neither of them were hurt. Horntails on a rampage destroy whatever it is that offended them and his guess was it was the Dragon Keepers. There

was nothing he had ever read that suggested they took prisoners, but that seems to have been what had happened. Fifty yards from the trees he and Tatiana were grabbed firmly by a dragon and carried into the air. Moments after they were grabbed, he heard the noise die down behind him. The entire flock of thirty-three had taken flight and had flown through the night to wherever these mountains were. Just before dawn, they were set down on this ledge with two young dragons. Young they were but neither he nor Tatiana could take them and hope to live and it was impossible to apparate for some reason. He assumed they were on the breakfast menu until another dragon showed up with a bucket of water in one claw and a (dragon) roasted deer in the other. It took Charlie and Tatiana at least an hour to realize that the water and deer was for them. This was exceedingly odd but they discussed it and decided to ride this out for now. If ever they got out of this alive, it would be a paper to remember!

Tatiana awoke as surprised as Charlie had been that she had not become lunch when she was asleep and saw there was a new bucket of water (or the old one had been refilled) and another roasted deer.

"Fattening us up?" she asked.

"Or keeping us alive," Charlie shrugged.

"Why?"

"No idea."

Just after sunset, their dragon guards took them gently in their claws and leapt into the sky again.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Anna (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye Sullivan, age 16 (6/20/80) (SP-6); CONCUBINE POTTER 8/5/96.

HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
  2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
  3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
  4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5).\*P
  5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
  6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
  7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
  8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
  9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
  10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
- 
1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (Sl-5); Coven Bonded.
  2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally Broadmoor, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (5/14/83) (Gr-2); CONCUBINE BILL 8/5/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae McDonald, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho Chang, age 17 (11/23/78) (Ra-6); CONCUBINE NEVILLE 8/5/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P

2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn Faulken, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy Tennyson, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone Tennyson, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (7/1/83) (Hu-2); CONCUBINE  
FRED 8/5/96.

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (12/2/82) (Hu-2); CONCUBINE  
FRED 8/5/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P

4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19 (9/30/76); CONSORT (3/15/96).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX: LETTERS HOME

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6th, 1996 – Pottersport, Charenwell

Harry and his girls had spent weeks preparing for the fifteen minute speech he gave on Charenwell Television the previous night. They had known that he would need to address his people about the Concubines and about Her Majesty's request for his help, and by extension Charenwell's. They also knew they had to explain the need to relocate thousands of Muggle Borns and their families from Britain. They also suspected that what Harry was asking was somewhat unprecedented. The Concubine expose was actually delayed by their research as they felt the speech needed to be grounded in an understanding of both the history of Charenwell and the history of House Potter. Charenwell was easy enough as there were many works by local authors, many of them wives or children of the Duke, that had been published there and were in the Library. House Potter, however, was not as well documented in published works.

The published works focuses exclusively on House Potter as Duke or Lord of the Isle, in other words it was practically silent on House Potter and England. To the Charenwell reader, this might seem sufficient as they had little regard for that land except as a place to sell their produce. But House Potter had significant financial interests in England and, in fact, derived more of its income from England than Charenwell. Harry, Daphne and Hermione all felt the English side of House Potter was important to what he wanted to accomplish in his speech: to begin recruiting an Army. The problem was that to find the history of House Potter in England, one had to go through every journal and chronicle in the archives. Considering the Archives contained written records of transactions and such going back to 80 A.D., they feared it might take a lifetime.

It was Astoria who discovered a manuscript in the Potter Archives. It was the work of Alice (Place) Potter (1852 – 1940), the second Concubine of Harry's Great-great Grandfather Duke Edward IV (1832 – 1941). Prior to Harry's Great-Grandfather, the Dukes typically had at least four Concubines in addition to a Wife or Consort, usually at the same time. Edward had five. Alice was acquired when she was seventeen in 1869 and apparently Love Bonded to Edward within

days. She was acquired not long after Edward's Consort Margaret gave birth to her fourth and final daughter and, due to a very difficult pregnancy, was unable to have any more children. Edward's first Concubine Alice already had two daughters as well and would add two more before she too was advised to stop. Alice, however, turned out to be barren. As she could not help her Love with providing an heir, she turned to providing a History of House Potter for future generations. It became her life's work as she had to learn to read Latin, Gaelic, Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, Old English and Medieval French in addition to much of the history of Britain, France and other countries just to understand the thousands of documents. (It would be Edward's Fifth and last Concubine Jennifer (1867 – 1951) who would finally give birth to his Heir Charlus in 1893).

Alice's history was incomplete. She obviously spent years learning the languages she needed. Her work from the first recorded Head of House Potter who was called Gesarius by the Romans (d. 118 "the Second Year of the Reign Hadrian") through the end of the "reign" of Duke James III; Fifteenth Duke of Charenwell (1561 – 1670) was mostly complete. But the years from then until her death in 1951 were still mostly just outlines and notes. Still, Astoria and the others had already compiled a lot about the remaining years through the death of Harry's Grandfather in 1988, so this work by Alice completed the picture.

It was the Romans who brought writing, records and bureaucrats to Britain when they invaded in 43 A.D. (Third Year of the Reign of Claudius). "Gesarius," Alice noted was probably not the first recorded Potter's real name as he was not a Roman but a Briton. It was not known where he was born or when or where he actually lived. The first record of him was a scroll granting his son Veritasis (68 – 142) his lands and properties upon his death. The record related he had been some kind of administrator for the Romans and had been granted lands for his service to the Empire. Upon his death, Veritasis received his town home in what became London as well as rental properties there containing a market and bath and a modest estate in what would one day be Mercia and was now Cambridgeshire. It was not huge, but it was the start for according to Alice all of those properties were still owned by House Potter.

The period of the first sixteen Potters from Gesarius through the death of Hector Potter (438 – 510, "reign" 475 - 510) Alice called the Roman Era even though Rome's dominion over England ended a century before Hector's death. During this period, Potters were Romanized and served as administrators and later soldiers and provincial governors all the while acquiring and keeping more estates. None of them were particularly large by themselves at the time. Not one of them was connected to the other. A cluster were located in what is now East Anglia and the Midlands in the Counties of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire generally with one estate a day's march from its neighbor. House Potter also acquired additional lands along Hadrian's Wall in modern day Cumbria and Durham and which included portions of the modern cities of Carlisle and Newcastle. These North and Middle Land estates would form the nucleus around which later Potters would expand their holdings.

Alice called her second period the Feudal Lord Potters which began with Hector's son the seventeenth Potter becoming Head of House in 510. He was Sir Galahad Potter (465 – 535, "reign" 510 - 545), one of the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table. For his service, Galahad was allowed to expand many of his holdings in the Middle Lands, estates that had once belonged to Arthur's adversaries. This period lasted until the death of the twenty-fourth Potter Atherol (602 – 695, "reign" 667 - 695). Following Sir Galahad, there were only two expansions of the Potter holdings as the Potters spent more time as warriors or trying to keep the recently arrived Anglo-Saxons from stealing their lands than acquiring new ones. The first expansion was the only "conquest" in Potter history. Atherol's father Hector (580 – 667, "reign 612 – 667) was the youngest Lord Potter in history prior to Harry. The average age for becoming Lord Potter was about 70) invaded and conquered a small portion of Northumbria bordering his Durham estates in response to raids from the north. The second expansion was the discovery and colonization of the Isle of Shen by Atherol's second son Dargoth (620 – 699, "reign" as Lord of the Isle 680 – 699, as Lord Potter 695 - 699) in 680. From Harry's perspective, this was an important era for his speech. From Galahad onward, the Potters had been warrior wizards and exceedingly good ones. Kingdoms rose and fell around them and often their lands fell squarely within two warring kingdoms, yet the Potters never lost a

square meter of ground. As fierce as they were at war, they were even more terrifying as politicians as this form of statecraft was just as essential in preserving their lands. Two House Potter Creeds were said to date from this Era. Gwain Potter (507 – 588, "reign" 569 - 588) was said to have instilled the notion that "Once Potter land, always Potter land." No Potter ever lost or sold any land they ever acquired. Arthur Potter (563 – 612, "reign" 609 - 612) upon being asked to become King of Mercia was reputed to have said "A Kingdom with a border has a fool for a King." He also was supposed to have said "It is better to die in the ranks than live upon a throne" which he did at a rather young age for a Potter.

Charenwell began with the colonization of the Isle of Shen by a band of warrior wizards and their families under the twenty-fifth Potter Dargoth, a period Alice called the Rise of the Lords of the Isle. When his father and older brother died, Dargoth also became Head of House and inherited the family lands in Mercia and Northumbria. His son Harfeld (645 – 752, "reign" 699 - 752) established the notion that Charenwell was under the dominion of House Potter alone, but that as Lord Potter in England, he was subject to whatever King ruled. There were minor expansions of Potter Middle Lands and North Lands estates during this period which ran until the death of the thirty-second Potter Harfald (823 – 902, "reign" 871 - 902). The twenty-seventh Potter Dirgard (688 – 715) died young, well before his father Harfeld. From Harry's personal perspective, however, he was also important. He was the first Potter known to have acquired witch Concubines and may have had a Coven. He must have been one horny bastard considering he died at age 27 leaving behind a widow, nine mature Concubines and two others he left to his son. Every Lord Potter since had at least one Concubine, most had at least five.

In 920, King Edward the Elder rewarded the thirty-third Potter Karsten (850 – 938, "reign" 902 - 938) for throwing back a Viking invasion (it was probably just a raid, Alice concluded) by granting him significant estates in what is now Surry and Kent including, to Harry's surprise, all of what was now Little Whinging. Karsten was also named Earl of Darby, a hereditary title, and became a member of the Royal Court, which apparently he hated. For the next few centuries, Lord Potter was a member of the local nobility insofar as the Muggles were concerned. But they were still wizards as well and relations between

Muggles and Wizards seemed to deteriorate further each generation. Finally, each was determined to keep the Isle of Shen out of the hands of the Muggles and their petty squabbles. It was a delicate balancing act and demanded each Earl be fearsome in battle and smart and better educated than any possible adversary. The Thirty-Fourth Potter Harold (901 – 988, "reign" 938 - 988) was the first to attend Hogwarts which apparently was over a century older than anyone in Magical Britain suspected.

It was this period of the Earls that proved Harry with the historical precedent he needed both for the Muggle Born evacuation and the justification for responding to the Queen's summons.

The decision to become a hereditary member of the Anglo-Saxon Muggle nobility was not done lightly. The Potters had remained Britons even under Rome as had almost all the magicals that had not come to Britain with the Romans. Gaelic was their first language although they all learned Latin as well. The common language on the Isle of Shen at the time was Gaelic and its written records were in either that language or Latin. But in England, House Potter had to adapt or lose its lands. When in England, the Lord Potter spoke Anglo-Saxon or Latin. The nature of secular power was such that merely being one of the largest landowners around was not enough to protect those lands from either Kings or their noblemen. To keep trespassers at bay, House Potter had to spend far too much time and resources on war and they had to win every fight. However, as a member of the Nobility, they merely had to keep in the King's good graces and defeat their rivals through court politics and not with the sword.

But as a member of the nobility, House Potter incurred obligations to the local King both to pay taxes (usually in the form of crops or livestock as money was scarce) and provide soldiers for the King's wars. Fortunately, England was in a state of relative peace when the first Potter was elevated, but that had been after a series of Kingdoms had been consolidated. In all probability, the First Earl of Darby was elevated for his family's long support of the House of Wessex and not for recent success in battle. The main reason was as part of the Court, he now exercised far more authority than before particularly over his own lands. Justice, such as it existed at this time,

was meted out by the nobility and as a mere property owner; his tenants (for most of his lands were rented out) were subjected to the whims of the Anglo-Saxon nobility. Upon becoming Earl, only he or the King had authority over those who resided upon his lands in England. The Lord Potters had long realized that land and wealth went hand in hand, but that land without people to work it was useless except as a place to hunt game, which was not a profitable occupation.

Becoming an Earl made him the Muggle equivalent of his magical status in Britain at the time. As Head of an old Magical line, he was a member of their governing council the Wizengamot which had been formed during the "reign" of the twenty-sixth Potter Harfeld (645 – 752, "reign" 699 - 752). In the magical world, the Wizengamot made law and saw it enforced among Britain's magical people. In the Muggle world, the King ultimately made the law, it was the noblemen who saw it enforced within their lands. And all people, regardless of magical status, were subject to the King's law at that time. What might be legal in the magical world might not be in the Muggle. Moreover, there was the increasing power of the Church and its laws as well, which made "illegal" things Kings and Nobles would never have bothered with. How the Kings and Nobles saw magic and how the Church saw it were quite different in reality, but for most raised in the magical world it was the same.

Magicals had been around as long as Muggles and for a long time they interacted openly. Prior to the fall of the Roman Empire, magicals had played significant roles in Europe both within the Empire and the surrounding "barbarian" tribes. They were healers, advisors to rulers and such and played a significant role in the pre-Christian religions. They also pursued more mundane pursuits. The collapse of Roman authority created political chaos throughout much of Europe. The Muggle rulers, none of whom were particularly powerful more than a day's ride from their home, began to see magic in a new way. On the one hand, wizards and their magic on their side were a plus. Then again, they were even more of a plus if there was some way to have a monopoly on magic. On the other hand, magicals had been exempt from many things in Roman times and felt they should still be exempt. Having a large land owner claim they

answered to no one but themselves was infuriating to those trying to consolidate power.

The Church slowly developed an even less accepting view of magic. First and foremost, magic was a part of the old religions and to allow it to continue was to promote heresy. Miracles were from God, not magic or pagan rites. As time went on, the status of witches offended the Church even more. While witches were by no means equal to wizards in magical society, as compared to the Church's view of the appropriate role of the sexes, they were everything the Church feared. Throw in the fact that some were aware of the sexual needs of young witches, which again flew in the face of what the Church wanted people to believe back then, and it was a recipe for trouble. Prior to the Ninth Century, trials for witchcraft or sorcery were unheard of in Britain. But they did begin. The secular authorities used them to grab lands and power. The local Church used them to suppress Satan and heresy. (Witch hunting as part of Papal policy would not become official until the fourteenth century and would then die out well before it died out in Protestant Europe.)

At this time, magicals were not nearly as skillful at hiding from Muggles as they would later become and they proved slow to adapt. There were exceptions such as House Potter who had "hidden" their Briton heritage for centuries to acquire and hold on to their lands under the Romans and later the Anglo-Saxons. Hiding their magic was not a problem. It helped that from 695 onward, House Potter officially resided on the Isle of Shen. It did not totally ban Muggle or the Church, but any hint of anti-magical attitude was punishable by death. Back in England, Lord Potter was as Muggle as he could be. He spent less than half the year there ensuring the rents were paid, trespasser dealt with and the neighboring nobles or ruling authorities placated. He also became in the eyes of the Muggles, the person to see if they caught a suspected Magical.

It was during the time of the thirty-first Potter Alfeld (770 – 871, "reign" 810 – 871) that House Potter became the de facto magical prosecutor. He would hold his investigations three times a year, once in the North, once in his Eastern lands and once in his Western lands. During those times, secular authorities or clergy could present suspected magicals for investigation. The secular authorities were far

more successful than the clergy at actually catching a magical; still the vast majority were Muggles. In most cases, the charges of magic had more to do with unrelated disputes over land, property, insults, and "stealing" potential mates or as a means to end a marriage. The accused stood charged with witchcraft or such, not their real offense assuming there was one and if found guilty they faced total impoverishment, banishment or death. Alfeld and his successors tried to resolve these disputes by getting the accuser to recant. Otherwise, either the accused was declared guilty or, if Alfeld felt the accuser was acting out of malice or spite, the accuser stood accused of trying to bewitch the investigator. It was a brutal time and to let all of them go risked losing credibility.

As for the magicals who were caught, he found them all guilty as charged. Unless the magical was a rival or threat to him in the magical world, he recommended banishment for them and their husbands, wives and children and provided the means to remove the scourge from their shores. Most often, the authorities accepted his recommendation. If they did not, he arranged for the accused to escape to the boat that was waiting for them anyway. The guilty magicals wound up owing Alfeld a Life Debt, to be repaid by moving to the Isle of Shen and remaining there for at least three generations. For young witches who did not have a husband who were brought before him, they were destined to become Concubines. He kept some, the rest he gave to wizards from the older Shen families on the condition that they were to be treated as additional wives in all respects. The Concubine Auction was centuries away and the early Lord Potters generally would not pay for a witch as money was scarce and they would not give up land (those who did buy witches paid in grain, beer, wine, cloth, wool and livestock).

Alfeld saw the role of House Potter as one of protecting Potter lands and protecting magicals. Alice wrote that his son Harfald (823 – 902, reign 871 - 902) questioned the obvious fabrications of this system and accused his father of being dishonorable. In response, Alfeld allegedly replied: "Kings and clerics suckle honor at their wet nurse's breast. Potters suckle statecraft."

By becoming Earl of Darby, the Head of House Potter became the final say on the disposition of suspected magicals. No longer could



King or clergy second guess his decisions due to his lack of noble status. They would actually have to prove him wrong, which never happened. In a manner of speaking, this was the first magical evacuation precipitated by oppression and prejudice. This use of banishment populated Charenwell and ultimately allowed it to prosper. Before Alfeld, there were less than 500 people on the island. By 1217, there were over 10,000 and that was at a time when the children were sent to magic school in England and most remained there. The numbers relocated in any given year were small. It had been estimate there might have been 9,000 magicals in all of Britain and Ireland in the tenth century and maybe twenty per year were sent to Charenwell, but as this practice continued until the Sixteenth Century, they certainly made a difference.

Finding a historical precedent for raising an army was not as straight forward. Individuals from Charenwell had gone off to fight for the Muggles for ages. In earlier times, success in battle meant looting. Later it was more the sense of adventure or something. But Charenwell as a nation seldom got involved abroad. The last time it had been done was World War I. Charenwell sent 1500 men off to that war in late 1915. That regiment was almost wiped out at the Battle of the Somme. A second regiment under the command of Charlus Potter landed in France in late 1918, but the war ended before they saw combat. It had taken a lot to convince both the Duke and the government to send troops. King George V asked, not truly expecting help. But it was the threat to Charenwell trade that pushed Charenwell to act. German U-boats were sinking their merchant ships as well. Charenwell also armed some of its fishing trawlers to hunt U-Boats, a trick the Royal Navy was using as well.

Before that, it was the Napoleonic Wars. Charenwell got into that war because it was affecting their trade with continental Europe and because France seemed to be sinking towards witch hunting, or so they believed.

Other than that, the only other time Charenwell had "gone to war" was 1066. The throne of England was in dispute. The thirty-seventh Potter Harstig (992 – 1091, "reign" 1035 – 1091) knew that two of the claimants would do all in their power to disposes him of his lands in England, still his primary source of income. As he was an Earl, one of

those claimants called upon him to send troops. This was Harold Godwinson. Harstig went to England and dutifully mustered troops from his various lands and marched with Harold to meet the Norse, slaughtering them at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. But Harstig had cut a deal with the other claimant William of Normandy. William would honor his lands and nobility despite his being "Anglo-Saxon" provided Harstig kept the British Magicals out of the fight. When he left for England, Harstig was accompanied by 200 warrior wizards who, while Harstig and the Muggles marched against the Norse, fanned out and suppressed any magical support for Harold save Harold's personal advisor Athlar Dumbledore, who was useless in a fight it turned out. William kept his word and, for turning over London, Harstig was further rewarded with lands in what is today Norfolk, Devon, Somerset and Avon (Avon was still a county when Harry was young). Harstig also asked to be downgraded to a mere Count. This was done both to play to Norman pride, but also to keep him out of Norman politics. As a Count, he retained several privileges, but was not sufficiently noble to be at Court or entertain the King and not eligible to marry into higher ranking families, meaning he was no threat. Equally important, he could not be required to take up the sword outside of England, and as most of William's interests were in France, that seemed (and would prove to be) a real possibility.

Based upon these, Harry was left to conclude that historically Charenwell fought abroad for two reasons. First, a Muggle war was threatening their livelihood and helping England win was good for trade. The only other time was when war threatened Potter lands in England, which were still the largest source of income in the country. Since 1217, Charenwell had been bound by treaty to come to England's defense, but they obviously viewed that provision narrowly and had never been called on it. From the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, Potter England sent troops to fight in France in a series of pointless wars. Charenwell stayed out. Charenwell refused all calls to send support during the War of the Roses as they did not consider a dynastic dispute a threat to England. That rationale also held true during the English Civil War for much the same reasons. They began a call up in 1940 when Germany threatened to invade, but stopped when the Germans called it off (although many went on to serve in the British Armed Forces anyway, just not under Charenwell colors.) Harry's immediate predecessors were considering it at the height of

the last Wizard's war, but it had not been made public. Charlus and Charles were thinking hit wizards and such, which would take years to train. What Harry was thinking could be done much more quickly, if his people supported him. True, he was counting on support from the Muggle Borns when they arrived as they would know the stakes. But he wanted at least some Charenwellians.

But this War was not like the others. Going to war with magical Britain might well destroy their trade, not help preserve it. Regardless of what happened, it was unlikely doing nothing threatened Potter England. As large as Charenwell was, it represented less than half the land he owned. The rest was spread out over England and with the exception of a third of Diagon Alley and five heavily warded properties (small Manors in Dorset on land acquired by the Thirty-Ninth Potter Alfred (1042- 1129, "reign" 1091 - 1129), Kent, Lincolnshire and Cumbria and a castle in Leicestershire), all of it was rented to Muggles including, it turned out, some properties "owned" by the Queen herself. Historically, renting to the Crown had been one way to keep them out of Potter business. If a King tried to mess with Potter interests, as in take the land, they found themselves evicted. It only happened a couple of times and not surprisingly never made the Muggle history books, but it seemed the Crown remembered the lesson.

Harry gave his speech. He felt the call for recruits was pathetic. The Concubine issue had been straight forward enough. He merely confirmed it was true having spoken with the victims and if anything the articles played down the atrocities perpetrated on their kin. He thought he did his best on the Muggle Born evacuation. Still, he was not pleased with how it went.

Tuesday morning an office opened on Sir Galahad Street in Pottersport promptly at eight. It was a short walk from the Floo Terminal which meant anyone in the country was a floo trip away. It was manned by a retiree who was bored out of his mind and figured this would be more interesting than listening to the wife moan about the roses. He had been in the British Army as a youth, but that was ages ago. It did not pay much, but it got him out of the house. Besides, he really did not think it would be that much work. All he was doing was collecting names and addresses of people who were

interested and making sure they knew it might be months before they were "called up." After all, they had no training program yet. He figured many would not sign up if they heard that. Even more, he really didn't expect much interest. He thought the Duke did a good job with that speech and was inspired by the bit about the evacuation, but he did not see the need to prepare for war yet and thought most would feel the same way.

When he opened the door, there was already a queue that stretched several yards down the block. They all looked so young, he thought. He was surprised that there were young witches in line as well, and then remembered that whatever this Air Force thing was, that's where many of the witch's were going. Once the door was open, he got behind his desk and called for the first person in line.

"Name?" he asked.

"Dudley Dursley," the young man replied.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6th 1996 – Office of the Head of Magical Law Enforcement, Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

Kingsley sat at his desk sifting through the pile of paperwork before him. He had already arranged to have a meeting with the eight Muggle Born witches he was sending on the mission on Thursday. He felt it was imperative that they knew the truth as to why they were going lest they somehow accept the mission the others were going to do. He wanted them to arrive at Charenwell alive. For now, however, the mounds of paperwork demanded his attention at least until the door to his office flew open and a very irate Dolores Umbridge stormed in. Waddled quickly more like, Kingsley thought with a smirk.

"Is something wrong Madam Umbridge?" he asked.

She threw a newspaper at him. "I WANT THAT PRINTER SHUT DOWN!" she screamed at him.

Kingsley looked at the paper. "Ah the Quibbler," he said, "always good for a laugh."

"Slanderous rubbish," Umbridge shrieked, "scandalous! It's sedition plain and simple! I want it shut down!"

"And what has this paper written to offend you?"

"Have you read it?" she screeched. "It's about ... about those WHORES! Mudblood filth, yet this makes them look like victims in a sinister Pureblood plot! It even suggests the Minister himself keeps such creatures for his amusement!"

Kingsley knew exactly what was in the article, but acted as if he never had seen it before. "Ah!" he said. "Concubines?"

"Useless creatures," Umbridge huffed. "Best thing that ever happened to such filth, but that article makes it look like the scum are all innocent and such! I demand you shut that paper down!"

"On what grounds?"

"Writing scandalous accusations..."

"For which the Daily Prophet is equally culpable. Should I shut them down as well?"

"They are loyal to the Ministry..."

"I see. And can you cite statute granting me authority to interfere with a business for being disloyal? You are aware the Minister keeps Concubines himself. This might be the one time the Quibbler got it straight, although I do miss the articles about Fudge baking goblins into his pies."

"Statute?" Umbridge shouted. "What rubbish is that? This makes the Ministry look EVIL! If the Mudbloods read this filth..."

"The fact that it is already on the streets would suggest they have," Kingsley said.

"Do you not see the problem? They will demand things of us!"

"I see," Kingsley said. "Far be it for us to be expected to do our jobs."

"I want this paper shut down!"

"You do know that the editor is dead," Kingsley said. "Xeno Lovegood was killed by Death Eaters a month ago."

"Obviously someone has taken over," Umbridge noted. "And this is not last month's issue! I want the slanderous bastards found and out of business!"

"This is hardly a priority for law enforcement," Kingsley noted. "We do, after all, have that mission coming up."

"Find the resources and shut this paper down!" Umbridge shrieked.

"Fine," Kingsley replied. "If this is that important to the leadership, I'll assign someone to it. I would like this order in writing."

"There is no way I'll commit this to paper!" Umbridge said.

"Then I have no choice but to give this the priority it deserves, Madam."

"I'm glad you see reason. When can I expect results?"

"Given the priority, my office should be able to look into this sometime in 2002."

"WHAT?"

"Unless you put the order in writing, I see no reason why I should make this a priority. I, unlike you, am a Department Head and have better things to do with my time and people than pursue petty vendettas. But if it's that important, you can put it in writing and I'll see what I can do."

"Fine," she grumped. Kingsley knew the witch was not about to put anything on paper unless there was no choice. She preferred not to have her name associated with anything. But he also knew that she

knew he seriously outranked her. If she pushed any harder, she'd be out of a job and she knew it. He hoped as she waddled out of his office that she'd let the matter drop. Then again, he knew her days were seriously numbered so that even if she sent the order, he could afford to ignore it.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6th 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Erin Sullivan awoke in the arms of a young man that law and magic now considered her husband. She was sixteen and had completed her O.W.L. Year at St. Patrick's School of Magic in Ireland. Yesterday, she awoke in her family home outside Dublin and today in a huge Manor in a country she had never heard of before with a boy she had heard of before but had never met until it was time for her to "bond" with him in the most intimate of ways. Despite being a Muggle Born, she had thought she knew a lot about the magical world. Perhaps she did, but there were some things about which she had little idea.

She had a younger sister who was two years behind her in school and four older siblings, all of whom had finished school and were already married. Her older sister Coleen was nineteen and had just married earlier that summer. Her other two older sisters and older brother had been married longer and between the three of them she had three nieces and four nephews ranging from one year olds to a five year old. Although her parents were Muggles, all of Erin's siblings were magical, as were their spouses and all the nieces and nephews had shown bouts of accidental magic. It had become a very magical family and one she had been proud of.

She was a year old when her oldest sister was eleven and had been invited to attend Ireland's magical school. It was the first time her family learned of the magical world. Her parents were quick to embrace it as they were informed that day that all five of their children (at the time) were magical and destined to receive invites to the school. As a result, while she grew up in Muggle Ireland, Erin had always known about magic and thought she knew as much about it as any person her age regardless of their upbringing.

She learned about witches and adolescence from her sisters when she was ten. That fall, she started to have strange urges that made

her irritable and very uncomfortable. As St. Patrick's was a day school for the most part, her older sisters were around and one of them noted her discomfort, which led to a very embarrassing talk about becoming a magical woman and the effects that had on her magic unless the "stress" was relieved. Her older sisters explained how to relieve the stress and she learned effective ways of attaining orgasms by watching them play with themselves. As embarrassing as it was, she found that it worked and whenever she felt the discomfort grow, she knew what to do. She also learned from her sisters about girl sex. Although they were not into that form of relief, they explained how it was not frowned upon among witches for that purpose and many girls chose that method over masturbation for a variety of reasons. As a result, her first few days at magical school were not the shock that it was for other Muggle Born witches.

There were ten girls assigned to her dorm room at school. The rooms existed as a convenience. As underage witches, the law prohibited them from practicing magic outside of school so when they were assigned practice as homework, the dorms were the only place they could legally do it. A few of the girls from magical families complained saying they could do magic at home, but the school forbade it. If a professor assigned practical homework, all of the students from that class had to spend the night. It was also convenient should one find themselves in detention as that was always after the evening meal. Erin was quick to observe that the girl sex girls tended to board over more often than necessary. As she was not one, it did not matter to her whether she was at school or not. She could relieve "the pressure" just as easily in her room at home as in the loo at school or in her dorm. Obviously, needing or preferring a partner for relief made a home remedy more problematic, particularly for girls with at least one Muggle parent or a Muggle Born Wizard as a father and non-magical society, and particularly Irish Catholic non-magical society, looked down upon what appeared to be a same sex relationship. As a witch, Erin understood that in most all cases, girl sex was not that sort of thing. The vast majority who practiced it had no romantic feelings whatsoever but were simply more comfortable having another bring them to release than they were alone. Then again, conservative Muggles also considered doing it alone as an abomination.



As much as she thought she knew about the magical world, Erin's knowledge of Concubines was limited to the plots and characters of trashy, magical romance novels. She thought it was make believe. To her shock, she learned it was all too real when she arrived here yesterday and learned that her Magical Guardian had sold her as a Concubine and that she had to be bound. It was a public sale, she was told, which the law and magic required consummation (private sales apparently did not absent other agreements). Erin wondered why that Minerva woman spent such time going into such detail about the bond. It was obvious from the start of the lecture that once summoned, there was nothing any of the girls could do to actively resist the bonding and whether they wanted to or not, they would engage in very intimate sex acts with their new wizard. It did not matter to her a whit that the Bond could mature into a very positive relationship if she allowed it. The fact of the matter, she had thought during that lunch, was that afternoon she was going to be raped, as there really was no other word to describe what was about to happen to her. Wouldn't it have been simpler just to let it happen rather than give her and the others with her time to think about what was to come?

What stunned her even more was that after lunch and after she had been led to a huge library where her virginity was to be sacrificed on the altar of Wizard misogynist supremacy, she was met there by Kathryn O'Fallon. Kate was her best friend from school and apparently was now a Concubine of this wizard. Kate spent an hour or more talking with her and trying to get her to relax. Eventually, Kate wore her down for lack of a better word and Erin was at least willing to enter this phase of her life with a somewhat open mind. It was hard not to listen to her friend who had never truly lied to her about anything. What gave Erin pause and convinced her not to hate the young man she would soon meet on general principal was how happy Kate seemed and how content she seemed. Kate would not lead her astray, would she?

Apparently, she had not. If all wizards were like Harry at his age, the lecture at the beginning of Third Year might have been unnecessary. That lecture was the official Talk about witch sexuality and was geared on convincing the girls that boys were not the means to relieve their needs as most boys could care less. Most boys were not

Harry. He seemed to know exactly what to do, where and when to touch, what to say to drive her to the height of ecstasy again and again and again. She had entered that library a virgin and left a very sated witch. In the process, she also learned that girl sex might actually be better than her right hand, having had sex with Kate (who had not been a girl sex girl before) and a few other witches while waiting for Harry to take her again, which he did whenever she asked and he was both ready and not pleasing one of his other witches. (She had to admit, watching him do so was a huge turn on.)

The morning after a bonding was a lie in for Harry and his new "bride," Erin was told. And yet after a lovely breakfast in bed and a very intimate bath where she learned that Harry was still a lot of fun even if she was more than a little sore down there, by ten he was dressed and heading out to start his day and she found herself alone in the Master's Chambers for a moment. It had to have been less than a minute since he kissed her and left when Kate entered the room and told her to put on her new, short silk robe and slippers and follow her. The robe was a small concession to modesty, as she learned that no one wore anything under it. If she or the other girls bent over, their bare bum was liable to be exposed to the world. It had charms designed to keep it from falling open at inopportune times and to support her breasts so that underwear was not required and apparently to keep her comfortable, neither too warm nor too cold despite the lack of any layers. She had been told that the robe was only worn on the First and Second Floor, which were generally restricted to Harry and his ladies (there were exceptions to the general rule, and she would be told those when it was appropriate.) Erin was also told that the robes meant they were home for the moment and free to engage in acts of intimacy either with Harry or his other girls. It was basically a sign saying that she was open for shag, which oddly did not bother her.

Kate led her to the Second Floor and to what would be her room when she was not sleeping with Harry. It was part of a two bedroom suite and Kate had the other bedroom. Upon their arrival, they spoke about their individual bondings in what Erin would have considered unnecessary detail only a day before. She was now eager to speak about such things, given how amazing it had turned out to be for her. She was still surprised at how eager she felt when it finally came time

for her to "return the favor." She had always thought she would not enjoy that aspect of pleasuring a man, but was stunned about how turned on she was when he finally asked her to go down on him and how thrilling it was to do that to him. She confessed to Kate she loved it when he finished in her mouth. Kate replied that she thought that was the next best thing to him finishing where nature intended, to which Erin could only eagerly agree.

"So," Kate asked, "did you go all the way?"

"You were there," Erin said, "you know that I did. Several times in fact and I am a bit sore as a result."

Kate chuckled. "Every one of us was warned not to overdo it with him if he was our first time and so far it seems none of us have heeded that warning. I was walking funny until dinner the next day. But that's not what I meant, Erin. Did you Love Bond with him?"

Erin nodded. "It was after we made love in his bed. I am surprised it happened so fast," she said. "I mean I barely know him."

Kate laughed. "You held out longer than most," she said. "I didn't even make it to dinner and at some never even left the Bonding Bench."

"How...?" Erin began.

"Some think it's because what we have here is not so much a Harem as a Coven. They're still trying to figure out all that it means, but they think the Coven is kind of self-reinforcing in a way. Our initial bond is enhanced by the Coven's magic, drawing us to bond more closely sooner than might be the case."

"I guess that kind of makes sense," Erin said.

"Excuse me?" a voice asked. The two girls looked up and saw an Elf Maiden in the room.

"This is Mimby," Kate said. "She's in charge of keeping this suite and helping us."

"Thank you Miss Kate," Mimbly said. "Miss Erin's things are in her room."

"Things?"

"Yes Miss," Mimbly said. "After you arrived, we went to your former home and gathered your things so you would not be without."

"Without my family knowing?" Erin asked in confusion.

"Oh no Miss," Mimbly said. "As with all First Generations and newly First Bondeds we spoke to your parents about what has become of you."

Erin gasped in shock. "What did you tell them?"

"It depended upon what they already knew, suspected and what we sensed their reaction would be," Mimbly said. "In your case, while they are disappointed in what has happened, they are happy you were bound to a wizard who will treat you well."

"They knew about this? How? I have three older sisters who are witches and they're not Concubines!"

"You're new Headmaster, Miss," Mimbly said. "Your old one was not one to supply his wards to the Auctions. Your new one, while not so willing as some, would. He only sold the two of you."

"Why?" the two asked. They both knew there were ten other Muggle Borns in their year out of the forty witches.

"He's Pureblood," Mimbly shrugged. "You two were the top of your class, higher than any Pureblood. He sold you to get rid of you as you make Purebloods look bad."

"How do you know this?" Kate asked.

"We have contacts with many school elves," Mimbly shrugged. "They are bound to the school and not to its Headmaster, so they can tell

what they know if you know what and how to ask. Little happens that an Elf does not know in their House."

"So we were sold because we were too good as witches?"

Mimbly shrugged. "Hogwarts sold all of its Muggle Borns of Bonding Age this summer, not just the ones who did well on exams. St. Andrews sold only one because her parents refused to pay tuition. The other schools sold none this year."

"That's so wrong!" Kate said.

"Does Harry know this?" Erin asked.

Mimbly nodded. "He bought all of the witches first sold this year. The Duke did not want more than his Hermione, but could not let friends and innocents be used by the Puerbloods as slaves, so he bought you all and brought you here where, although you do have to be bound, you will not be slaves. He's doing far more than that to protect innocents. Soon, all Muggle Borns will be asked to come here to be free of that place and never again fear losing their daughters to evil minded Purebloods."

"My family?" Erin asked.

"Are already making plans, Miss Erin. You're parents don't want what happened to you to happen to your little sister and your older ones don't want their children to worry about such things."

"When will they be coming?"

"It's up to you to decide that," Mimbly said. "If you have accepted this life, write them a letter and they may be here in a couple of weeks. But you and only you can decide if they should come. The Duke wants you to have your family, but does not want you to be sad because they might not accept..."

"I'll send them a letter straight away," Erin began.

Mimby smiled. "That's good to hear, but let's first unpack your things and arrange your room. Plenty of time for letters later."

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6th, 1996 – Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Rose Granger was again enjoying the outdoors at their hotel, this time in Victoria, British Columbia. She began thinking about how much Hermione would love this place, at least to visit, and immediately began to miss her only daughter. As if on cue, a member of the hotel staff appeared and explained that they had received some mail and a package for her and her husband, who once again was having a lie in. She thanked the man and looked at the items as he left. Again, they were from Gringotts. The package was addressed to her and the letter to her husband. She eagerly opened the package.

Inside were a couple of books. Rose loved to read every bit as much as her daughter and if there was one problem with this trip (aside from the facts that Hermione was goodness knows where and this trip was because there were evil wizards out there who wanted all of them dead) it was that they had spent very little time in book stores and what they had found at airports and such had little of interest. The top book was entitled: *On Magical Bonds of Love*. (Self Updating). Rose was a little surprised at the title and was certain it was a trashy magical romance novel. Such works were her guilty secret and Hermione knew that, but it was an odd gift under the circumstances. The second was entitled: *A History of House Potter*. (Self Updating). There was also a letter addressed to her.

3 August 1996

Dear Mum:

Don't worry, I also wrote a letter to Daddy. The first thing I'm going to tell you, as Daddy will find out when he reads his letters, this will probably be my last letter. It would seem your "vacation" is about to end. If everything goes as planned and you don't miss your flights, I'll see both of you here Monday, August 12! Daddy's letter has a lot about what's going on and how my education is going to continue and stuff. This one is a little different.

I hope you can promise me you won't tell him about what I'm about to write. I want to see the both of you so much, but I'm afraid he might get mad and not want to come. You might too. But I'm hoping you won't. (In case you're wondering, this letter is charmed in such a way that he can't read what you're reading.) I know I left enough clues in my last letter, so I'll just tell you. Yes. Harry and I are married. Don't worry Mum; there was no cart before the horse or any of that. And, if you're afraid you missed the wedding, you didn't. One of the books I sent you is a draft of a book about love based bonds. There are several different kinds, but if they form and mature between a witch and wizard, it binds them together in ways you can't imagine. Muggles might call it a match made in heaven sort of thing. It kind of works like that in time. But once such a bond forms, we are considered married in our world and adults as well. It is, however, still customary to have a wedding ceremony. We hope to have one soon after you two are here.

In case you're wondering, our Bond fully matured on 23 June. We can't say for certain, but we both think it's been forming since Second Year and maybe since First Year. Our specific Bond has a name. It's called the Consort Bond. It's apparently fairly uncommon as it requires a deep, selfless kind of love and true commitment from both people before it can work. It also helps if the couple has not been involved in a physically intimate relationship prior to bonding. But the book covers it in far more detail, so I won't spoil it for you.

There are other bonds you should read about and in particular the Concubine Bond. It was meant to be a substitute for the Consort Bond, a way to get to that bond without the match made in heaven thing. It can be that, but most wizards in Britain use it to enslave witches. Had I not become Harry's Consort, I was set to be enslaved by a wizard. It's totally sick! Then again, the more I learn about Magical Britain, the more I'm glad I'm shot of the place.

The second book is a history of Harry's family. It was written by one of the wives of Harry's Great-great Grandfather and it too is unfinished. We're working on finishing it and thankfully the first author (Alice) has already translated all the materials in the family archives (many are written in Latin, Old Gaelic, Anglo-Saxon, Old English and French and such). She wrote the history based on journals, letters

and other documents we have here and they date back to around the time of the Roman invasion of Britain! It's arguably the best history of magical and non-magical Britain you're going to find anywhere! (And Charenwell as well!)

I doubt you'll be able to finish them both before you get here, but knowing you, Mum, you're going to try!

I'll see you and Daddy on the 12th! I miss you so much!

Love,

Hermione

Rose contemplated opening one of the books when Robert joined her.

"What's this?" he asked.

"A letter from Hermione," Rose replied, "and some new reading material."

Robert saw what looked very much like a couple of romance novels. "I see our daughter is aware of your guilty pleasure?"

Rose blushed slightly and nodded. "This came for you, she said handing him another package, also marked that it was from or came through Gringotts. Robert opened his package and read his letter from Hermione. "She sounds quite busy," he chuckled. "Doesn't seem like much of a Holiday there. Then again, a huge library and research projects? She must be in Hermione Heaven," he added with a chuckle. "She also says we may be calling our own little adventure off sooner than expected."

"She wrote me the same," Rose confessed.

Robert then opened a second envelope with an odd look on his face.

"I don't believe this," he sighed. "I've been recalled!"

"Recalled?"



"The Ministry of Defense is recalling me to active service! Bloody reserve commission! I'm being assigned to something called the British Military Advisory Group, Charenwell... Isn't that where Hermione said she is now?"

Rose nodded. "She didn't say anything about that, though."

"Maybe she didn't know," Robert said, "but she wasn't kidding we're going to be there sooner rather than later. They included travel orders and tickets for both of us, Rose! We leave day after tomorrow from Vancouver, non-stop flight to Toronto. We then have a British Airways flight from there to London on Friday. We're apparently already booked into a hotel for a couple of days and then have a flight out of London City Airport nine o'clock Monday morning. Even have the boarding passes already!"

"Guess they mean business," Rose said. "What will you be doing?"

"Doesn't say," Robert replied. "Says that for security reasons, I will not be advised of my duties until briefed by my new C.O. sometime next week. Tossed me a bone, though."

"Oh?"

"Brevet Colonel Granger at your service, Ma'am," he added.

"You sound okay with this," Rose noted.

"To be honest, I think I could do without looking at case after case of poor dental hygiene for a spell. But I will reserve judgment. For all I know I'll be inspecting motor pools and such in which case bad teeth is more interesting."

"At least we'll be near Hermione," Rose said.

"There is that," Robert agreed. "So, what do you say about getting out and seeing the sights? We only got today and tomorrow to do so."

"I do want to see the botanical gardens," Rose agreed.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

Harry and several others, including some of the RAF officers and men from the Charenwell Flying Club were standing by the tail of a Douglas Dakota. Before them stood Fred and George Weasley.

"Glad you could come to the party," Fred began.

"We were thinking about your little Ministry problem," George said.

"We think even if the wards do their job, we still need to contain any problems."

"Such as magical portkeys, tracking devices and the like..."

"Or a witch or wizard who survives the ride and has a change of heart..."

"Don't want any Ministry suck ups with wands wandering about, do we?" George added.

"Got some goodies we were working one for pranking fun that were easily adapted for bad guy containment," Fred added.

"And fortunately, we are told these planes are magically hardened so spells and such don't do bad things to their flying stuff," George said.

"Got this one set up for demonstration purposes," Fred added. "Climb aboard!"

There were about a dozen of them all told and they climbed aboard the plane. "Right then budge forward," Fred said and they did. They now looked to the rear of the plane where the twins were standing. "So, how do we disable and disarm a dozen or so Death Munchers or Aurors-of-Questionable-Morality and not have our people wind up getting hexed?"

"And keep the bad guys from mucking with the plane?" George added. He pulled out a roll of what looked like duct tape.

"Duct tape?" an Air Force Officer asked.

"It was," Fred said, "now it's a portable, easily applied magical shield generator! Observe!"

George taped a strip beginning midway up the side of the plane, down to the floor, across the floor and up the other side. "Note the yellow bit on one side," George said. "You tape the strip with the yellow towards where your bad guys are. Tape it from the widest point to widest point as I did so there are no gaps or leaks in the shield. Then, when ready touch a wand to the tape and presto!" George did just that and they could see a slight shimmer that the magicals knew looked just like a shield charm activating. "Now, if we assume the bad guys are at the back of the plane, we now have a shield between us and them that'll stop anything but an unforgivable..."

"And will hold much longer than normal," Fred added.

"They can still break it," Harry noted. "Enough spells..."

"Fear not, oh great one," Fred said. "We did not envision using it to let them be merry with their wands."

George pulled what looked like a Cricket ball from his robes and held it up. "Magical stud grenade," he said. "Activates with a touch of the wand," which he did, "and will discharge a stun field on impact. It will knock out any unshielded person within thirty feet..."

"Hence the portable shield to protect us good guys from the discharge..." Fred added.

George tossed the ball towards the back of the plane and when it hit the rear a flash of red light enveloped everything behind the tape shield. "Knock them out for at least two hours," George said.

"What we were thinking is put the bad guys up front," Fred said. "The cockpit is already shielded, but you can use the tape for an additional measure of safety. Good guys will be in back behind the shield tape."

Now we guess the bad guys won't try any funny business until after you lot take off and probably not until you land or they can see land and apparate off."

"So," George continued, "you simply wait until sometime after take off; toss one of those babies into where the bad guys are seated and their down for the count."

"You can then liberate them of wands and other magical nasties at your leisure," Fred finished. "Bad guys won't know what hit them!"

"Questions?" George asked.

There were, but over the next hour or so the Twins answered all of them and they now had a plan to deal with the Ministry's plot with little fuss.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*

4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

#### Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally Broadmoor, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
11. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
12. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
13. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
14. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.

2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Alice Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN: CARE OF MAGICAL CREATURES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Three horses walked abreast along a wide path through the gardens of the Estate proper. Upon them sat three with striking blonde hair, a girl, a young woman and their mother. They were enjoying a leisurely morning ride and conversing in their native tongue.

"How have you been, Little One?" Apolline asked her young daughter.

"It's only been a day or so, Mother," Gabrielle said. "I can't really say."

"Oh? Are they not treating you well?"

"No Mother, they are. But it takes getting used to."

"It was your choice, Little One."

"I know, but it was not an easy one."

"You are young. Big choices are harder with youth," Apolline said. "But it was necessary given the Bond you formed and the situations in Europe. Your sister, Father and I would want you safe and happy, not living in too much fear and concern. Remember, your sister does live near. And I will be here quite often."

"You will?" Gabrielle asked.

"You may be betrothed, Little One, and your sister may be married, but I never will stop being your mother. I want to see you grow up and not read about it in letters. So your Father and I agreed that I should visit here on weekends to spend time with family. We also agreed that we shall spend the Christmas time here with you two and for the foreseeable future this shall be our place for summer Holiday. The truth is, as you shall receive your education here and not in France or England, I shall see more of you than I did your older sister."

"I'd like that," Gabrielle said. "The Bond does pull me to him, but I don't want to lose you or Papa."



"It is not his intention either," Apolline said. "We had a nice chat at lunch yesterday when he stopped by to check on the discussions and he agreed that my coming often is for the best. He was most grateful for it."

"Until recently he never had a true family," Fleur said, "at least not one he remembers. It is very important to him."

Gabriella giggle. "Grandmother says to be careful what you wish for, you may get it. Harry wished for family and now...?"

Apolline nodded. "Minerva said the same to me as well when I met with her about Gabrielle's education. Not having a true family, Harry is very protective of the ones he does care about. By joining his family he does not want any of his ladies to lose theirs."

"Some may anyway," Fleur said. "It might be some families will be unwilling to accept this."

"But it won't be because of anything from Charenwell," Apolline said. "We can't make people accept what they don't wish to, but Harry will not make accepting difficult. I must say your father and I believe you two are quite lucky. True, we would have preferred a more conventional arrangement. But having met your life mates, we know you will be content and happy in your lives and we both feel we could not have arranged a better match had we tried."

"Thank you," the two girls said.

"So," Apolline smirked, "have you seen any mischief, Little One?"

Gabrielle was confused for a bit and then realized what her mother was asking and blushed. "No mother," she replied. "I was not at the Bonding the other night. The others were, but they agree that as I am not fully Bonded and it was not my time, it was for the best that I was elsewhere. Harry has been clear that I shall not be asked nor required to be about when such things are going on and he wants the others to respect that. If they get ... playful ... and want some time with Harry ... or each other ... it should not be in a room where I am."

The couple of times such things looked like they might happen, they left for another room. Harry told me I am the one who decides when it is right to see such things, but he hopes it's not until I am much closer to Bonding Age. For now, they don't hide behind closed doors, but neither do I go looking."

"I am pleased to hear that," Apolline said. "I was afraid he might not have realized we were teasing him a little. And where were you for the Bonding?"

"In my new room. Dany was helping me unpack my things and decorate."

"Dany?"

"She's the Elf Maiden assigned to the flat I share with Miss Cissy. She's very nice. I have my own room which is even bigger than at home and Cissy has the other on the other side of our private sitting room. She does treat me like a daughter, I guess."

"Which one? Cissy or Dany?"

"Oh, they both do, but I was talking about Cissy."

"Do you like her?"

Gabrielle nodded. "She's nice and can be funny. I can speak French with her which is good too. I still don't understand all the English."

"It will come in time," Fleur said. "And then they shall learn they've unleashed a little monster," she added with a giggle.

"Fleur!" Gabrielle protested.

"She has a point, Little One," Apolline said. "You do enjoy conversation."

"Fine!" Gabrielle pouted.

"So what did you do yesterday?"

"After breakfast Harry left with Cissy for his work and many of the others left as well. Not all left and I spent the morning with Miss Connie who speaks and understands French well enough, although there were others about too. Connie showed me around the Manor including the huge Library where others were about their business and reading and such. That's where they all bonded to Harry you know."

"Really?"

Gabrielle nodded. "Connie showed me where it happens and told me a little about it, but not the details. She said that was where Harry bonded to Hermione and she to him and it was their first time and that Hermione decided Harry should bond with others rather than let the English Wizards have them and they all Bonded to him there as well. She also said that all of Harry's wives were present for all the Bondings of those who came after aside from his second Consort Luna. Hermione was there for that one, though."

"We found it is a good thing to join others to the family that way," Fleur added. "We have our own place for that where we are staying and Bill has asked for an exact copy for our new home."

"After lunch," Gabrielle continued, "I spent my time with Miss Daphne and Miss Astoria who are very good at French and we talked about things in general. They told me that I will continue my regular lessons but I will also begin learning magic as well. I can't wait! They also told me more about this family and that many of the Sisters – which is how they call each other – will be having children soon."

"Really?" Apolline asked.

Gabrielle nodded. "Lady Hermione, Lady Luna and Miss Minerva, Miss Mallory, Miss Dora and Miss Daphne will be having babies. And let's see... Miss Ginny, Miss Stacey, Miss Rhonda, Miss Karen, Miss Katie, Miss Padma and her sister Parvati and Miss Connie have permission to as well. Oh, and Miss Cissy hopes to too. Miss Daphne told me they think it's because they've become a Coven. She says the others all want to have children. Miss Astoria will wait until next

summer or so as aside from me she is the youngest. The others may not wait more than a few months."

Apolline looked at Gabrielle then at Fleur who blushed.

"It's not that different in my home," Fleur admitted. "You know I am expecting."

Apolline nodded.

"Mary, Lana and Donna are also expecting," Fleur said. "Six others have permission. Each House has their own rules about that as to when a girl can get permission, although in most cases so long as they are going to be at least sixteen when they are due and have Love Bonded, they will get permission for children."

"You're expecting," Gabrielle asked after that news had sunk in. "I'm going to be an Aunt?"

Fleur nodded. "Yes. Although you will be one anyway through Harry."

"Daphne said I could help with the little ones when they come," Gabrielle said.

"That's wonderful!" Apolline said.

"I was about your age when you came," Fleur said. "Mother made sure I helped with you."

Apolline chuckled. "You're big sister was very good about a lot of things, but needed persuasion to learn to change you. It was good for her I think. Based upon how you have grown, your sister should make a wonderful mother. If you help your family the same way, so will you when your time comes."

"You will be here when your granddaughter arrives?" Fleur asked.

"You already know?" Apolline asked in reply.

"Harry's Mallory is a Healer," Fleur said. "She checks us all each Monday once we're sure, we have appointments every two weeks until it is time."

"And when...?"

"Around the middle of April," Fleur said. "I'll be sure to tell your Father," Apolline said with a smile.

"How long will you and Papa be staying?" Gabrielle asked.

"Your Father will be returning to France tomorrow evening, although he will stop by for a time to spend some time with both of you. I'll be returning Sunday evening, but as I said I shall try and be here on weekends."

Gabielle pouted. "I shall miss you two."

"You shall see plenty of us, Little One. Well, more of me at any rate. Your father is quite busy now as Minister you know."

Gabrielle nodded. "Where is he now?"

"Meetings," Apolline replied. "He's meeting with the Lord Mayor of Charenwell and members of their government as well as our Ambassador and the Magical Ambassadors from Spain, Germany and Scandanavia."

"Why?"

"Our home country was all but invaded during the last wizard war in England. Thousands were fleeing to our shores, although some did go to the other countries as well. The English assured us they were dealing with the trouble, but we saw little of their results and we were stuck having to find lodgings and food for those who fled. This we are willing to do again, but not like before. With their Dumbledore in charge of the I.C.W. we could not control immigration and the refugees and the Dark Ones took advantage and tried to spread their evil to our shores. This we will not allow again. Your Father and the others are discussing ways to prevent the English from going where

they will in our lands and to keep the Evil Ones out altogether. They may be discussing other issues of mutual concern as well..."

"And Harry?"

"He is leaving much to his government and those who do this for a profession, although he does meet with them as well."

"His Duke business," Gabrielle said nodding. "Miss Cissy and the others told me he does a lot of things during the day, so much that he needs more than a day to do them. So he has more than a day each day to do all he needs to do. Miss Cissy helps him with his Duke Day stuff. He also spends a day training and another learning and is here and not here at the same time."

"Time Turner?"

Gabrielle nodded. "I haven't seen two Harry's yet, but others have so they told me so I wouldn't get too worried or think I was mad if I do."

"That was very thoughtful of them."

"They are being very nice to me," Gabrielle smiled.

The path had taken them into a nice, shady wood when Apolline suddenly stopped her horse. "Mon Deux!" she exclaimed as Fleur and Gabrielle stopped as well. Before them was a large creature that Gabrielle had never seen before. Its back end was not unlike a horse, with a fine grey coat, the single hooves of the equine at the end of its rear legs and a white, swishy tail. But that was where the similarity ended. The front of the creature was avian, grey and spotted feathers covered it back to two huge wings and its forward legs, as long as they were in back, ended in the huge talons of a bird of prey. The head large and had the sharp, curved beak of an eagle. Its yellow eyes glared at the three of them as if deciding whether they might be tasty. "Bow," Apolline whispered to her daughters. They did as she asked, watching the beast and noted it almost immediately bowed back.

"What is it?" Gabrielle asked.

"Hippogriff," her mother replied.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Scotland, U.K.

Alastor "Mad-eye" Moody was furious with the old fool. The man was supposed to be one of the best educated and thoughtful wizards of his day and one did not live well past one hundred as he had by doing stupid things as the man had tried. Alastor had seen children exercise more caution and vigilance than this so called Leader of the Light had just earlier. Had Dumbledore been on his own as originally planned, the man would be dead! Alastor had held his tongue, waiting to get behind the door to the idiot's privacy warded office before saying more.

Just as the door closed, Alastor spoke: "That was a foolish thing to do, Albus," his voice far less respectful in tone than in language. "What possibly possessed you to try and reach for that trifle? You knew how dangerous the outer defenses were!"

"You said it yourself," Dumbledore replied resignedly, "there was a powerful compulsion charm on the object."

"Dragon Dung! You were told that before you tried and reach for it! You're skilled enough with the mind arts to have not fallen under that spell. If I hadn't stunned you..."

"I thank you for that, Alastor," Dumbledore sighed. "It would have proved fatal in the end as you say?"

"Nasty bit of necromancy," Mad-eye nodded noting a gleam in the Old Man's eye. "Did a scan while you were out cold. In addition to that Compulsion Charm that seemed to infatuate you far too much, there was also the Leper's Curse."

"I'm afraid I'm not familiar with that one, Alastor."

"Bloody good thing too," Mad-eye said. "Hasn't been used in centuries as far as I know and the law regarding it hasn't changed."

You get caught using this curse, it's the Veil for you. You can forget Azkaban. This ain't some Unforgivable, although it's at least as bad. It's Necromancy which still carries but one penalty for even dabbling in it: death."

"And what would have happened had I tried on that ring?"

"If the curse were still active – which it was when you went for it – a slow, painful death. The curse was designed to mimic Leprosy."

"An old Muggle disease," Albus noted.

"And quite nasty. But this is only a mimic. Had you put that on, you would have begun to die immediately. Your finger would die first and there's no cure. Cut it off and it's already too late. Although, do nothing and you'd lose the finger anyway once it rotted off your hand. You'd then lose the hand, and arm in progression. When it runs out of a limb, it would begin killing your internal organs, eventually finding one you can't live without. This assumes, of course, the numerous infections your dying body would contract didn't finish you off first."

"And now?"

"Curse has been deactivated," Moody said. "A few drops of blood before it contacts live flesh dispels the magic."

"So it is safe?"

Moody nodded. "Magically inert," he saw a flash of shock from Dumbledore. "All you got there is a cheap bauble."

"Inert, you said? There is no other magic?"

Moody nodded reaching into his pocket and tossing Dumbledore the ring. "Why Voldemort would go to such trouble to protect that thing is beyond me."

"It was supposed to be one of his horcrux's," Dumbledore said. "It was an heirloom of the Gaunt family – his mother's family. It was an ancient, overly Pureblood line of which Tom Marvolo Riddle, who is



now called Voldemort, it the last surviving member."

"Overly pureblood?" Moody asked.

"Marope Gaunt was Riddle's mother," Dumbledore said. "She was either a Squib or borderline. She was one of two children of Marvolo and Dinah Gaunt, who were brother and sister as were their parents and at least the previous three generations. She was to mate with her then nineteen year old brother, but used a love potion on a Muggle – Riddle's father – and evaded that fate when she was twelve. The potion wore off before Tom was born and Marope died giving him life. The Gaunt line was too poor to arrange marriages with any Pureblood line so they resorted to incest to maintain their 'purity' rather than marry into a less pure line."

"That's taking it to an extreme," Moody said. "And why do you think that ring was a horcrux?"

"Riddle was obsessed with both ancestry and Hogwarts," Dumbledore said. "Once he knew he could make a Horcrux, he began seeking out objects that were either connected to his magical family or the Founders. I have learned from sources over the past few years he succeeded in finding two Founders' artifacts while a clerk at Borgin & Burke's after he finished school."

"Oh?" He knew Dumbledore suspected Voldemort had made at least one of those vile things, but the old goat never told anyone more than a fraction of what he should. Even then he parsed out his carefully guarded information as if it were worth far more than all the gold in Gringotts. Moody never understood this from a practical point of view. How the hell did this man expect anyone to help him? Then again, maybe he was so full of himself the thought never crossed his closed mind that maybe someone knows something he does not.

"He murdered a woman named Hezphia Smith, a collector of rare magical objects, particularly objects of historical significance and a frequent customer of that establishment. Missing when her estate was settled was a locket said to belong to Salazar Slytherin and a

cup belonging to Helga Hufflepuff. Riddle had, by then, conveniently disappeared."

"So he's a murdering thief among his other crimes," Moody replied. "Bit of a leap from there to a Horcrux."

Dumbledore sat at his desk and opened a drawer. He pulled a small book with a black, leather cover and placed it on the desk. It looked a mess and as if a hole had been bore through it.

"It was a Horcrux," Dumbledore said. "Tom Riddle made it while still a student here at school. He opened the Chamber of Secrets in 1943 and used the beast within to murder a fellow student to create his first Horcrux, this book."

"First?" Moody exclaimed in feigned surprise. Moody was sufficiently within the Inner Circle to know about Albus's pet theories, but the man never had told anyone the details before. "And how do you even know it is one?"

"It surfaced again about four years ago," Albus said. "It was left with an unsuspecting First Year girl who used it as a Diary of sorts. It took possession of her and while under such possession she opened the Chamber again. The events of that year are consistent with the effects of a Horcrux attempting to regain physical form."

"But it was destroyed, I take it?"

Dumbledore nodded. "Fortuitous circumstances really. Harry managed to slay the beast in the Chamber, save the girl and destroy the Horcrux. He never told me the whole tale and I'm sure it's even more impressive than I make it sound, especially as he was but twelve at the time. One day, perhaps. Alas, he has grown into all too typical a teenager and has decided not to mind his elders as he should, but that's just a phase."

Moody decided to leave the last comment for later. "Still, what makes you think Voldemort even attempted to make more than one? No one has before." He had never questioned Albus on this point before, mainly because it had not become an operational necessity until

today but also acting like a blind loyal lackey had become necessary once he decided the Old Man was not to be trusted with anything, not even with wiping his own arse...

"Which is one of many reasons why he would try, Alastor. His ego would demand it. He has since made comments suggesting that he succeeded. Nothing explicit, mind you, just off hand comments about how he has cheated death more thoroughly than any wizard in history."

"Bragging is not the same as doing," Moody said. "It usually implies just the opposite. And, given that the object you hold is not a Horcrux..."

"Are you sure?"

"It's magically inert, Albus! Where it such a vile object, it would register magic! It would show up as a product of Necromancy over and beyond the curses that were upon it! But, while I can't say that ring was never magical, I can say it is not magical now."

A brief look of disappointment flashed across the old man's face.

"Could have been a decoy," Moody supposed.

"No. It was not."

"You know for an absolute fact that thing was a horcrux?"

"Sorry, I was thinking of something else," Dumbledore replied. "The stone in the ring was magical once. You're saying it's not?"

"Ring and stone inert. Had to be if it was to be used for one of those things. The vessel must be purified of all magic or the soul fragment would either not affix or be rejected."

"Y-you sure?"

Moody nodded. "Advanced Auror training," Moody replied. "We learned about what those things were and how to detect them. Any

trace of pre-existing magic on the object and you can rule out a Horcrux. If that thing was magical and if Voldemort was going to use it as a Horcrux, he had to purge the pre-existing magic first. It's the whole reason you use inanimate objects," Moody continued, "and preferably gold ones. Iron rusts, wood rots. Gold does neither. As for a magical living thing, the magical purge required would kill it and it would rot away."

"I believe Voldemort's snake might be one," Albus mused.

"Is it magical?"

"Unnaturally large..."

"Which could be the case simply by being a familiar. It's just a snake? It's not a basilisk, ashwinder or roonspoor?"

"None of those."

"It is conceivable that a non-magical living thing might serve, but there is no record of that being tried for the simple reason that while magical creatures can live a long time, most non-magical creatures do not. Were one to try a living thing, a tree would be a better choice due to their generally longer lifespans, but even then ... not all trees live long and they do have a habit of being cut down or burned."

"B-but H-Harry," Albus began.

The old man slipped! Moody rejoiced inside. The old bastard thought... "You thought the boy was a Horcrux?"

"He had the taint of it," Albus said in his defense. "He has that unnatural connection..."

"The taint could be because Voldemort killed that night intending to make one. Necromancy leaves a powerful magical stench, for lack of a better word. The connection? Who knows? It might have been an echo or something or a piece of the man's spirit, but Potter was not a Horcrux. He's not an anchor to keep the bastard's soul from crossing over."

"I took him to the Department of Mysteries," Albus said. "Rookwood said it was possible he had a piece of another's soul. You're saying he could not be a horcrux?"

"This is the same Rookwood who was later sentenced to life in prison for being a Death Eater? Consider the source, Albus. The lad is said to have killed Rookwood's godhead and you deliver him up on a platter? What did the bastard tell you to do to the boy?"

"Kill him," Albus said.

"Which you did not do."

"There's still the Prophecy."

Moody was well aware of that and nodded. "Which assumes Potter is the One. For all we know, the One was born years later."

"I'm sure it's Potter," Dumbledore replied.

Of course, Moody thought. House Potter has been thwarting House Dumbledore for centuries so naturally Harry is the One true target for the old goat. "Academic," Moody said, "given that Potter has absconded."

"A minor setback," Dumbledore replied. "I had certain affairs to attend to, but I can now remedy that situation."

"Oh?"

"He might be able to evade Owl Post," Dumbledore continued, "either by Ward or distance. Phoenixes, on the other hand, have no such restrictions." Albus walked over to the perch where the phoenix Fawkes sat watching. He pulled an envelope from his robes, tied it to the bird's leg and told Fawkes to take the letter to Harry Potter wherever the boy may be. The bird disappeared in a flash of flames.

"A letter?" Moody asked. He doubted Harry would be fool enough to accept post from that bird knowing who its owner was, but he still

worried as he knew the bird could probably get to Harry before he could warn the lad. "Don't see how that'll work. The lad made it pretty clear where you stand with him now."

"Compulsion charm," Albus shrugged. "He'll open it. Once he does, the portkey activates and he arrives here. Then it's the usual doses of charms and he's little tantrum is at an end."

Moody nodded as if agreeing. Something deep inside told Moody that Albus had a better chance making Chaser for England in ten years than he had of tricking the boy with his flashy pet.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Laura Madley was thirteen years old and had finished her Second Year as a Ravenclaw at Hogwarts. She had entered that year not much different than she was the year before, but had a growth spurt Fall term in more ways than one and arrived home for Christmas in desperate need of an entirely new wardrobe as she was then four inches taller than she had been only months before and needed a real bra as the training ones she left for school with were both useless and too tight. She knew she wasn't quite ready for boys in her heart and head, but her body was. Not that any boys had noticed. Then again, the school robes were about as unflattering to the female anatomy as one could get. She might have a "decent rack" for her age and not a bad one for even an older age, but unless you were seriously top heavy, the robes all but hid that. Boys only began noticing girls Third Year and that was because the girls could wear "real" clothes on Hogsmeade Weekends thus displaying it if they had it.

She was told that boys loved boobs so if you had them and wanted boys to notice, flaunt them. She was told that by a Fourth Year Ravenclaw girl while they were naked in bed playing with each other's "boy magnets" before getting to the real reason they were there in the first place. Ravenclaw was arguably the most girl sexed of the four Houses. Laura had wondered whether it was intellectual curiosity, as it seemed it was a few days after her first period when she was taken aside by a Sixth Year girl, who Laura knew slept with any girl who'd let her, and was told about the need for releases. The

talk led to a practical demonstration of release methods by the girl and Laura's first orgasm courtesy of the girl. She later learned that Marietta had been every Girl Sex girl's first time in Ravenclaw since her Second Year unless they were not into it at all. There were seven girls in Laura's year and dorm. They were all old enough to need such stimulation by the end of last year and Marietta had done them all first, and they each other later. Still, some of the other older girls who had "partied" with the Second Years made it clear that there were things a girl could not do that a boy could if he knew what he was doing.

Laura's summer had been rather boring. Her Dad worked for the Ministry of Magic and with the stuff that had been going on and the I.C.W. Audit, he had to cancel their planned trip to the Continent. Laura's older brother Marcus had been a Fourth Year in Slytherin and, despite being a Half-blood and therefore at the bottom of that House's social pool, was almost as much of a jerk as the rest of that House. Then again, he always was a jerk, in her opinion. Her younger sister Lyla was ten and would not be starting Hogwarts until 1997. She liked Lyla, but Lyla was such a kid now.

The Madley's were an old magical family, but no one could call them Purebloods. Her brother survived in Slytherin mainly because the Madley name had been around since well before most of the names in that House and as long as all but a few in Britain. But the Madley's never held to Pureblood ideals or customs. This meant her Dad had married a witch whose parents were Muggle Borns and was proud of that fact and, unlike the Pureblood elites, he did not maintain a Concubine. Laura did know a little bit about what that was. Purebloods bought young witches as playthings for themselves and their friends. Her parents never really told her who sold witches, how they got them or any of that, just that it happened to some unfortunate women because the person who could sell them needed money or something. Growing up in the magical world, Laura was not as horrified that something like that could happen as she might have been otherwise. After all, many magical homes had House Elves and while Concubines were different, it was the same sort of thing and it had been this way forever. Laura was told not to worry about such things and she believed her Daddy would never sell her or Lyla.

What she did not know was he already had. In 1987 he had gotten into serious financial trouble as a result of a card game and sold Contracts of Interest in his two daughters to a friend who had promised not to exercise the contracts. As neither girl was old enough to bond, the contracts could be left alone forever. It was also a private sale, which also never needed to be executed in full unless there was another contract requiring it to be fulfilled. That was not the situation regarding Laura. When she was four, she was sold as a future Concubine and it was not until last year that the sale could go forward to completion. The buyer had promised, but not sworn never to complete the sale, or sell the Contract. But a lot can happen in nine years and the Buyer had fallen on hard times and sold his Bondable witch at Auction. That witch was Laura and she knew nothing about it. In all probability, her father had forgotten that his little girl might be sold off despite assurances to the contrary all those years ago. While Laura knew of Concubines, her Dad had never told her about that Contract.

This was how she found herself in a huge room with plants and chairs and such. She knew she was not dreaming as she had been out for a walk when she suddenly was no longer walking through the woods near her home and was here. She had never been here before or even dreamed of this place in any way. She saw she was not alone and that there were three others looking around in confusion. Two were Ravenclaws like herself. Su Li had been a Fifth Year and was one of two in that year whom Laura knew were not on the Girl Sex menu. Although Su was Muggle Born and that usually meant they would not be because it was unacceptable in their world, the real reason was Su hated Marietta. Laura could see that. Marietta might be good at sex, but she could be a real bitch if you needed her for anything other than sex. The other girl was Laura's roommate Morgan Carpenter; another Muggle Born but one who wanted the "full experience of being a true witch" enough to ignore her non-magical upbringing at least in the dorms. The third girl was a Hufflepuff in Laura's year whom she recognized from classes named Bonnie Carter; although aside from the name, Laura knew nothing about the girl.

"Laura?" Morgan asked, "what' going on?"



"No idea," Laura said. That was not entirely true. She had an idea and hoped she was very wrong for once. But before she could think about much else, she was distracted when she saw a blonde haired girl who might have been her little sister's age run past them calling out something in a language Laura though sounded French; not that it mattered because Laura did not know that language.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

Kingsley was at his desk. He really wondered why he had accepted Amelia's old job and wondered if she hated it as much as he did. Were it not for the fact that he was in a very good position to "spy" on the Ministry as a senior Department Head for his "real" boss, he would have asked for a return to Auror duty. But, for as long as he could maintain his cover, the information he was able to gather was more important than the indignations of the petty politics and boredom of the mounds of paperwork. He was trying his best to put his Department on a war footing despite being an agent for a foreign power. He hoped Voldemort could be defeated without any outside intervention. But Kingsley was realistic enough to know that this could never happen so long as Dumbledore and the Purebloods continued to pull the strings in Magical Britain, hence his support of a group that might actually do something.

The door to his office flew open and that dangerous moron of a toad walked in.

"Don't you ever knock?" he snapped at Umbridge.

"Now see here, Kingsley..." she began.

"It's Director or Director Shacklebolt to you!"

The woman ignored him, as usual. Were she born a tiger, Kingsley was certain her mother would have eaten her as a cub. She was living proof as to why it should be illegal for Purebloods to interbreed. "What have you done about the Quibbler?" she demanded.

The truth was absolutely nothing. He had no need to waste his people's time on that because he already knew the answer and the answer was there was nothing the Ministry could do about it as it was now a foreign publication distributed by means outside of Ministry control. "I sent some people over after our meeting yesterday," he lied.

"And?"

"You'll be happy to learn their offices are shut down."

"Excellent," she smiled and turned as if to leave.

"But not so happy to learn that their offices were absolutely empty and appeared to have been vacant for some time," Kingsley said.

"What?" she turned again.

"The office and its print shop have been on the market a month," Kingsley said. "Vacated July 3rd, according to the agent. The Agent has no idea where it went and has no information about how to contact or even locate them."

"But they are publishing!"

"Not from that location or any other property registered with the Ministry," Kingsley said.

"How... They've gone hiding! FIND THEM!!"

"I don't see why this is so important..." Kingsley began.

"Minister Fudge wants them out of business! This should make that a top priority for you!"

"We both know Fudge still draws a pay stub only because the Wizengamot can't get the quorum necessary to sack him. We also know that Scrimgeour thought the Ministry should have sacked you ages ago for being useless, provided he hasn't found a way to have you locked away. You have no authority over me and I am tired of

your attitude. I've got far more pressing matters than dealing with your bad press days and my people do as well."

Umbridge began to say something.

"I would suggest you leave my office before I have you escorted out, Undersecretary," he pressed a button on his desk. "Amy, send security."

"This isn't the last of this, Shacklebolt!" Umbridge huffed and she turned and left.

Actually, Kingsley thought, for you it is.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

While Gabrielle Delacour might have been barely ten, she was in her mind a Potter now and Potters were brave and caring. The Hippogriff seemed placid enough and had not really threatened them at all, but almost as soon as it bowed, others appeared. Her Mother whispered that the creatures were generally not dangerous, but could become so and told Gabrielle to slowly head away towards the Manor. She and Fleur would stay and back away slowly so as not to provoke the creatures, but Gabrielle needed to get some help here just in case. Help, in Gabrielle's mind meant only one thing: Harry.

She did as she was told, slowly turning her horse around and slowly walking away from her Mother and sister, hoping nothing bad would happen. She was not terrified with worry. She was certain they had their wands and could apparate away if need be, but that would leave the poor horses to whatever fate awaited them. She was soon out of the woods and looked back and saw nothing but trees. Hoping she wasn't being followed, she spurred her horse and let it run.

She knew who would be at the Manor, at least from her House. A Harry was off somewhere doing Duke things. Cissy would be with that Harry along with four of his other wives. Another version of Harry was training and that was away from the Manor as well in the mornings. She had been told they were learning to fly airplanes or something like that. That Harry had ten of his ladies with him. This

was a bonding day, she was told, so the third Harry and another ten or eleven witches should be at the Manor. She also knew it was morning and the bonding began around two in the afternoon which meant Harry and his ladies could come help her mother and sister. She hoped at least one of the witches who spoke French was there.

She pulled her horse to a stop just in front of the Manor and practically jumped off, running towards the front door as soon as her feet were on the ground. She knew that there would be an Elf just inside in case of visitors and sure enough there was.

"Where is Harry?" she asked in French. Fortunately while most of the humans in the House either could not speak or understand French nearly as well as Gabrielle could English, the Elves had no such problems.

"He's in the Library, Miss Gabrielle," the elf began.

"Thank you!" she said running off before the elf could say anything more. Gabrielle did not hear what else the Elf was trying to say nor did she bother to notice the four young women standing nearby with confused looks upon their faces.

She came to the Library and saw the door was closed, not thinking as to why. She opened the door and ran inside looking for Harry and suddenly seeing far too much of him. It was only a second and only from behind, for as soon as she saw what she saw, she covered her eyes. Harry was naked and moving his hips back and forth rapidly and she got a really good view of his backside. Directly in front was a witch, also naked on all fours facing away from his with her head between the legs of another witch lying on the floor. Gabrielle may have walked in on her parents once and knew more about such things than a lot of girls her age, but she never imagined anything like that and to walk in on it...? She was blushing furiously, horribly embarrassed and keeping her eyes shut. She didn't want to say anything yet because she didn't want them mad at her for coming in on them. While her eyes were quite closed, her ears were not and that was almost as embarrassing as seeing! They were making noises!

She didn't know how long she stood there waiting for them to stop so she could speak, but finally the noises from all three were over, aside from panting and some contended sighs and Gabrielle figured they were done doing whatever.

"Harry!" she called out, still with her hands over her eyes.

"Gabrielle?" he replied with surprise in his voice, but at least he did not seem angry.

Gabrielle then began talking away in French, as she could not think of the English.

"What?" Harry's voice asked.

"She said her Mum and sister are in danger and need your help, Harry," a female voice said.

Gabrielle said some more.

"They were riding through some woods and came upon a ..." the female voice said. "I don't know the word."

Gabrielle clarified.

"A large magical creature, she says. The back end is like a horse, front like an eagle."

"A hippogriff?" Harry asked.

"Oui! Oui!" Gabrielle replied.

"More than one, Harry," the female voice said.

"I didn't know there were any here," Harry began.

"You can open your eyes now," another voice giggled.

Gabrielle did and saw that the girls were now wearing robes and Harry was dressed.

"She says she sorry about seeing," the blonde haired witch Gabrielle knew was named Connie said.

Harry shrugged. "Where are they?"

"She'll show you. She left her horse out front."

Harry shook his head. "No. Dobby?"

An elf appeared. "Yes Sir?"

"I need my Firebolt. Meet me at the front door right away."

"Sir!" Dobby said and disappeared with a pop.

"Can you show me where they are, Gabrielle?" Harry asked.

Gabrielle nodded.

"Can you do it while on my broom with me? We'll get there quicker."

After a short pause, Gabrielle nodded.

"Come with me then," Harry said taking Gabrielle's hand and leading her quickly, but not too quickly from the Library.

When they reached the front of the Manor, Dobby was waiting with the broom. He had Gabrielle mount it first and he was soon behind her. She was in heaven feeling her future Bond Mate's arms around her yet knowing this and some minor kisses on the cheek and such was as intimate as they could be for some time. Still, to be in his arms like this was magic. But they had a mission.

"Can you point me to where they are?" Harry asked quietly.

"Yes," Gabrielle replied. It was a word she could do in English.

He kicked off the ground and she pointed to where he needed to go. It did not take long before they arrived at the place in the woods.

Gabrielle was very relieved to see that her mother and sister were still on their horses and unharmed, but there were far more of those Hippogriffs around than when she had left to find Harry. He landed beside her sister and dropped their broom and took her by the hand leading her to the Hippogriff who had first appeared. He bowed to it, and she followed, and the creature bowed back without any hesitation. Harry all but pulled Gabrielle forward and was soon stroking the beast's head.

"I'm so sorry Buckbeak," he said. "I forgot about you, my friend."

There was an "Eeep!" from Gabrielle and Buckbeak turned to look at the girl standing beside Harry. Harry wondered what was going on for a moment. Then Gabrielle began saying something in very fast and excited French, none of which Harry understood. He looked at the two women on horseback.

"She says he is speaking with her," Fleur told Harry in surprise.

"Really?" Harry asked.

A strange conversation then began with Gabrielle supposedly hearing the thoughts of the Hippogriff or something like that which she would then tell her mother and sister in French, which they in turn would translate into English for Harry. Harry really did not know what to think about it. Then again, to expect magic to make sense was expecting a lot.

Buckbeak was the head of his Herd. For over a century, they had been scattered all over Europe with some in Spain, others in Scandinavia, France, the Black Forest in Germany and Scotland. Two groups had gathered at magical schools where they were out of sight from Muggles and also protected from magical poachers. Buckbeak had come to live at Hogwarts with six of his Herd and his principal mare was at Beaubatons in France with another six. Buckbeak had been head of his Herd for over two hundred years as Hippogriffs tended to live for many centuries unless they ran afoul of poachers, a fate that had far too often cost them foals.

Buckbeak considered Harry a friend and Hermione as well. They had saved him from the Huntsman a couple of years earlier and through them he met Sirius whom he also considered a true friend and with whom he had some wonderful adventures. It was through Sirius he learned of Charenwell as the two had traveled here following their escape a couple of years earlier. Buckbeak had decided that if and when he could, he would gather his herd and bring them here. He knew of the magical preserve and knew his herd would be safe here and they could again have foals and not fear poachers. When Sirius died a wizard came to the place in London and let Buckbeak out and he had spent the several weeks since gathering his herd.

As for his ability to communicate with Gabrielle, this talent had always existed amongst his kind. He had hoped to make that kind of connection with Harry, but also knew that the connection required at least one of them to be a foal. Harry was not a foal, but Gabrielle was and she was also open to the connection and not a threat to Buckbeak or the herd.

The herd would reside at the Preserve, but Buckbeak wanted to maintain this new connection. Harry had helped the creature and by extension the whole herd and Buckbeak and the others had decided to make Harry and Hermione honorary members. Gabrielle was to be one as well as she had this connection to them and she was, while but a foal, fated to become one of Harry's mares. A Hippogriff was offered to be stationed at the Manor both as a messenger between their human herd members and a protector. Harry thought this was an interesting idea that might have potential going forward and agreed to the idea. A Hippogriff named Asalara, a young stallion without a mare yet, would fill that role, although Buckbeak promised to be by frequently. The odd exchange ended with Gabrielle being offered the chance to spend the day with the herd, less Asalara. Harry had no problems with this and assured Gabrielle and her mother and sister that he trusted Buckbeak. Fleur would have considered joining her sister were this not a Bonding Day. Apolline had been invited to observe the last Bonding in Fleur's House. As Harry had a new witch to attend to as well, he too had to decline. But little Gabrielle would go with the herd and be returned to the Manor by supper time. Harry thought this was an excellent way to get her away from the Manor during the Bonding.



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – A small woods in Sussex, U.K.

England is known for its hikers and bird watchers, among many other things as long as one was not thinking food. There were all sorts of clubs around dedicated to birding and hiking and sometimes both and the birders all hoped to identify either a new species or at least a non-native species that had somehow found itself on England's shores. They would have marveled at the huge and strange scarlet and gold bird perched in a tree in the woods had any been around, but none were.

Fawkes had been given a most loathsome task by a most loathsome wizard. Fawkes was a phoenix, a bird of beauty and purity and one associated rightly with good magic. It was generally believed that a phoenix might choose a human companion on rare occasion and that companionship was de facto proof that the human was a good natured person. In almost all cases this was true. It was not true in Fawkes case.

No one knew where phoenixes came from or how old they were. They were rare and there was no reason to believe they would be less rare. Phoenixes lived for up to twenty years or so, although sometimes less. When that incarnation reached the end of its life, it would burst into flames and be reduced to a pile of ash. Within the ash, the essence of the bird would be reborn as a chick. It fed on ambient magic and would rapidly grow and fledge. Within the few weeks it was but a chick, however, it was vulnerable.

Over a hundred years ago Fawkes had undergone a burning day. As a chick, he had been discovered by a most vile wizard who knew the potential of the bird and bound the bird to him with dark magic. For over a century, Fawkes had fought that bond to no avail and to his dismay remained enslaved to an evil man and used as proof that the man was good when in fact he was not. Several times, he had come close to breaking his bonds with that vile man, only to be bound tighter by dark magics. The last time he almost escaped, the evil one bound him with magic tied to another supposedly under the man's control. That bond proved unbreakable or so it seemed.

Fawkes was bound to Dumbledore again by a dark rite that tied him to Dumbledore through a baby named Harry Potter. The charms and wards keyed into the boy were tied to Fawkes as well. So long as Potter was bound to Dumbledore, Fawkes was as well. But that bond had failed utterly within the last month or so. Fawkes had remained trapped in that man's office which was warded in such a way that he could not leave without permission and he had feared the old man would bind him again.

While a phoenix was associated with good, they were both highly intelligent and could be quite devious. Fawkes knew the old man could sense the signs of the phoenix breaking through the bonds and had learned how to hide that fact. All he needed was permission to leave that damnable room and he knew he could be free again. It had been a long wait, but the old man was so wrapped up in his schemes, he had forgotten that the current bond was tied to a bond that had failed. This little mission was Fawkes's chance. He was told to deliver this letter to Harry Potter and he knew it was a trap for the boy. But free of his prison, he no longer had any reason to follow the old man.

He sat on a bough and pecked at the letter attached to his leg. Once it was gone, he was free. The old man could not know of his disobedience as he pecked away and finally saw the vile thing fall free and float to the forest floor below. He sang a song of joy before disappearing to wherever, free of that evil man at last.

The letter, however, remained dangerous. It was, after all, a portkey and Fawkes had somehow managed to free it from the envelope. It sat on the forest floor for only a few minutes before a badger found it and grabbed it for some reason most likely associated with the compulsion charm. As soon as the badger touched the parchment, the portkey activated transporting a very irate badger to an enclosed office far to the north. Little would remain undamaged in the badger's rage.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Laura Madley lay atop her wizard having yet again given herself to him. It was strange, she thought as she returned to reality from another powerful orgasm. She should have felt something different

about this. She had been sold off! But now she did not care. Her wizard was so wonderful and this Bonding Day was magic in and of itself.

She had been talked to for hours by Professor McGonagall and later by Padma and Luna who were from her House at school. That Professor McGonagall was also sold off and a Concubine made things seem better. She had always looked up to Padma and was relieved that she too was in the same situation. They all had said the same thing: accept this and it can be wonderful.

It had only been a few hours, but were they ever right! Harry was so wonderful it was indescribable. She was nervous and scared at first, but he made it seem as if it was meant to be this way so when she first stood naked before him, her only concern was whether she was pretty enough for him. He said she was and did he ever show her! She did not know that kind of sex was even possible! Poor Marietta had no idea how to really pleasure a girl and Laura had melted beneath his touch and kisses. When she recovered from her first mind blowing orgasm, she knew there was nothing she would not do with him if he but asked.

He asked her to do such wonderful things! The whole thing was so fantastic! She took him in her mouth and loved every minute of that as she was able to please him that way. He then returned the favor and showed her things she did not even know were possible. Finally, it was the big moment when he would take her completely and she would lose her virginity forever, and she so wanted him to do that! True, it hurt a bit at first. But afterwards? She was not sure words would do it justice!

She watched the girl named Erin have sex with her Harry as part of the ritual. Erin was her cross-bonder and after it was all done, she could see the collars on all the others who bore witness to her becoming one of them. She then took the leap of faith. To date, no one as young as she had Love Bonded with their wizard, and Laura wanted to be the first. She wanted to do it with him inside of her and soon found herself straddling her wonderful mad with him filling her up inside and as she rocked slowly, she placed his hand over her heart and bare breast and she placed hers over his heart and swore

the oath, offering herself to him in mind, body, heart, soul and magic and when he accepted just as she climaxed, she saw the flash of magic that changed her from Laura Madley, a thirteen year old girl to Laura Black, the eleventh wife of Lord Harry Potter Black. She was his forever and could not have been happier.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7th, 1996 – The Pyrenees Mountains near the French and Spanish Border.

The dragon flock settled in for the night in another range of mountains. Charlie knew this was something different and as he and Tatiana also tried to settle in, they compared notes. Tatiana so hoped they would survive this adventure. They could write whole books about what they had learned about dragons these past few days. Charlie, while equally hopeful of a publishing contract in their future, was more concerned for the present.

It was clear they were being brought along for some reason and he was beginning to think they would live to see many more years together. Still, he was wondering. Charlie knew more than the average wizard did about navigation. He had frequently flown long distances by broom and unlike most wizards, refused to rely upon a "point me" spell to navigate. He knew the stars and geography well enough to know that this was not some form of migration.

The dragons were moving west. The route had obviously been scouted in advance, as each of their stops were remote from wizards and muggles but in locations where the dragons could find water and forage for food both for themselves and their two human "guests." By Charlie's reckoning, they were now in the mountains on the border between France and Spain and given their location, this was yet another stop over. It clearly was not a location where the flock would set up permanent house keeping.

Charlie was concerned about where they were going. Another day of travel could find them at the western most point in Europe and he doubted there was any place there for the dragons to do more than just stop for the day. But he doubted the dragons could cross the ocean. He wondered where they were going. Unfortunately, he could

not ask them. All he could do was spend the time in his Consort's arms and continue to hope for the best.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

#### Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*

7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (3/30/83) (Ra-2);  
CONCUBINE BLACK 8/7/96.

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally Broadmoor, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).
16. Bonnie Faith Carter, age 13 (10/27/82) (Hu-2); CONCUBINE BILL  
8/7/96.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P –  
boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl  
(twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. HAlice Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).

9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).
16. Su Li, age 16 (2/21/80) (Ra-5); CONCUBINE NEVILLE 8/7/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Alice Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).

13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura Carpenter, age 13 (5/23/83) (Ra-2); CONCUBINE GEORGE 8/7/96.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.



## CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT: INVASION

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

Harry had been at the base since three-thirty in the morning. This meant that his "honeymoon" night with Laura had been cut short, but Hermione had already scheduled a "make-up" for tonight. Well, tonight for Laura. It would be the day after tomorrow for Harry. He wanted to be at the base for all of this day's events, as it was the first potential direct conflict between Magical Britain and Charenwell. The plan was simple enough, but that did not mean that nothing could go wrong.

Thirty-six young witches were to be turned over to representatives of Charenwell for repatriation. They were to be delivered to a large, open field in Wiltshire which had been identified by the Muggle RAF. They had considered a seldom used airfield further to the east, but decided it best to stay as far from London as practicable. The field was "unimproved" and about a kilometer and a half in length, relatively flat and not currently plowed. While not ideal, provided it was dry it was adequate for the task at hand and fortunately it had been dry in that part of the country for some weeks.

Four of the Duchy's Douglas Dakotas had been tasked with this mission. The field was easily within the range of the planes, particularly given the fact that the planes were not carrying anywhere near their maximum payloads. The lead plane carried some cargo, mainly a large tent and some collapsible tables and chairs and had twenty passengers. This was the ground element that would meet and sort the witches and provide a modicum of security. They all had emergency portkeys just in case, but the general consensus was that if this mission went as expected the Brits were not going to try anything at the landing field. Among the ground element were four fathers of some of the witches who were supposed to be transferred. They had been briefed. They were there to ask questions of the witches to verify their identity and had been told that it was expected the witches in question would not be the ones promised. Once they verified that the witches were "fakes" they were to do nothing aside from inform the Mission Commander who was the pilot in command of the lead plane.

The remaining three planes would be used to transport the "rescued" witches back to Charenwell. Each plane would carry twelve of the witches and each had four people who would be in back with the passengers. If the witches were the real ones, their job would be to make them as comfortable as possible, but no one expected that to be the case. Their real job was to subdue the imposters as soon as possible and wait until the planes crossed back through the wards at which time they were to deal with the results. Based upon intelligence, it was expected that at least eighteen of the imposters would die at the ward line and maybe far more than that. Once it was absolutely certain that the Ministry was engaged in a double cross, the Certificates of Title to the real witches would be activated bringing them to Charenwell immediately. Moreover, if intelligence was correct and a significant portion of the witches proved to be an assault team, Charenwell was prepared to strike back.

The planes had taken off before dawn three minutes apart and flew off to the Northeast towards an open field programmed into their magically hardened GPS navigation system and further marked by a radio beacon courtesy of the Muggles. The tent would hopefully be up and ready even before the last plane had shut down its engines. The plan was to be ready at least an hour before the Ministry showed up with the witches. Still, as well planned as the mission was, Harry could not help but worry for those assigned to it. Most were older men and women from Charenwell and few had any real combat training in any form. There were five "advisors" from the Muggle military, three of whom were magical. Dora was on one of the planes as were the Twins, Angelina and Alicia, all had more training than most. Dora as an Auror and the others had been active in Harry's D.A. the last year and, if the Ministry of Magic affair was any indication, were better than average if a fight should break out.

Harry attended the final mission briefing and personally spoke with each and every person taking part in the mission. He was in the tower of the air base as each plane took off into the early morning darkness and now sat in the Operations Center waiting for whatever was going to happen. The center had a huge map on the wall that showed Charenwell, Southern Ireland and Southern England with the flight path for the mission stenciled over it. An elf placed markers on the

map representing the known or estimated position of each of the planes. RAF Charenwell had radar, but its coverage did not extend all the way to the British coast so when the planes flew beyond the radar coverage, their position was estimated based upon routine reports from the co-pilots as to their position, course and air speed. Any other day, this would be boring. But until each of these planes was safely back home, Harry was worried and each minute was tense.

"Safe Haven, this is Dragon Lead," a voice sounded over a loudspeaker. "Feet dry five miles west of Porthleven. We have scattered clouds although it appears cloud cover is heavier to the northwest, over."

"Roger Dragon Lead. Out," a man replied over a radio set.

Harry watched as the marker for the lead plane moved to the British Coast in Cornwall. The first plane was now in British Airspace and over land. The plane was flying without IFF, meaning it was invisible to civilian air traffic control radar as the screens displayed the IFF data and not the raw radar blips. RAF Air Defense Radar most likely had the plane on its screen, but Harry had been told they knew enough not to make further inquiries about these flights. The flight plans had been carefully laid out so that the four planes would not be flying into any commercial air traffic. Still, it did not mean this mission was totally safe. One by one, Dragon 2 through 4 reported they were crossing the coast at about the same location. So far, so good Harry thought.

The truth was this was the easy part. Harry knew the landing was not without risk as they were landing on a grassy field and not a hard runway. While Dakotas had been used on unimproved airfields all over the world, it was not considered the ideal sort of landing field. If the ground was wet or if there was an unseen pothole, the planes might well crash on landing. But the need to be unseen by Muggles drove their choice of landing field as there would be few if any anywhere in the vicinity of their chosen landing field. Minutes passed as Harry awaited the next report.

"Safe Haven, this is Dragon Lead, GPS places us ten miles from Capture Point. Ninety percent cloud cover over objective as

anticipated. We have the beacon and are beginning our decent. Just hoping the weather guessers are right about the 1500 meter ceiling otherwise this might get dodgy, over."

"Roger Dragon Lead, Out."

Capture Point was the code name for the remote field where the planes would hopefully land. Harry and many others in the room were tense with anticipation, although only those with flight training knew how risky the next few minutes could be. It all came down to variables and Harry was not fond of variables. Hermione was with him holding his hand. His Luna was acting as co-pilot in Dragon-3. Neville was present with Susan, but also had a witch in the air as Amber was acting as co-pilot in Dragon 2. For them, it was a training mission of sorts as the pilot was doing much of the work and they were merely assisting having just begun the transition to the Dakotas. Harry knew Luna chose that plane type because it would be busy and be involved early and often. That did not ease his mind at all.

"Safe Haven, Dragon Lead. Capture Point is in sight. On final, over."

"Dragon Lead, Safe Haven Roger. Request current ceiling, over."

"1200 meters, over."

"Roger out."

A little relief as the lead plane had found the barren field, or so it seemed. The question now was would it land safely. A few minutes passed as the anticipation mounted.

"Safe Haven, Dragon Lead. We're down and safe. Out."

A cheer went up in the room.

"Safe Haven, Dragon one. Field in sight. On final, over."

"Dragon one, Safe Haven, roger out."

Over the next fifteen minutes, all of the remaining planes landed safely. The first hurdle in this mission had been completed successfully. Harry knew, however, there were more to be crossed.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – "Capture Point" Wiltshire, U.K.

The four Dakotas were parked at the far end of the grassy field facing in the direction they would take off if all went well. The twin engines on each plane were shut down as they prepared for the next phase of the operation. The ground team from Dragon Lead was setting up a large tent and preparing for the arrival of the "missing witches" while a small group was also scanning the surrounding area for possible ambush. Fortunately, Capture Point was far from any trees or other cover and their modified omnoculars (which the twins had recently developed after studying "Mad-eye" Moody's magical eye) revealed no one nearby. The nature of the device was such that it would detect anyone under an invisibility cloak or disillusionment charm. It appeared for now as if the Ministry duplicity was limited to the fake witches and not an ambush of the planes themselves.

That had been a concern in the planning of this mission. The rescue team was deep in hostile territory and vulnerable. Their capture would make good press for the Ministry, but would also result in harsh action by the I.C.W. as they were aware of this mission and its reasons and, although the Ministry was probably unaware, various magical ambassadors and the French Minister of Magic himself were monitoring the mission. The intelligence did not suggest an ambush, but neither Harry, Remus nor Kingsley were willing to rule such action out. The report came back that the protective wards had been erected. It was now impossible to apparate or portkey to within five hundred meters of the tent or planes and the planes could start engines and be off before a wizard could run the distance and get close enough to cause problems. A special "exception" in the wards was left open. Through Gringotts, the Ministry had received 36 special portkeys for the alleged concubines to use that would bring them within meters of the tents. Harry looked at his watch and saw they would become active in five minutes. Moments later a second report came in. The two "sappers" had located the local ward stone for the Ministry's magical detection grid and deactivated it. The

Ministry was now blind to any use of magic anywhere around Capture Point.

The ground force had six magicals covering the arrival space. The "witches" would be arriving one at a time at roughly sixty second intervals. Even if they intended to try something, they would not have a chance. As soon as they arrived, they would be disarmed. In a way, this was the first of several tests that would prove or disprove a double cross. The experience with the Confiscated Concubines showed that the majority of them no longer had a wand. If this group all had wands, it would be suggestive.

The first "witch" arrived right on schedule and was immediately placed under a petrification charm, allowing one of the "greeters" to search for any wands or other magical devices and remove them safely. The witch had two wands, an emergency portkey and several other magical devices of a suspicious nature. Originally, the plan was to do this in flight. The twins stun grenades were the means of subduing them. They were still going to stun them, but they changed the plan. It would not do to have thirty-six armed magicals of unknown intent in any position where they could cause trouble. Once the magical devices were safely removed, the witch was obliterated and unpetrified and escorted to the tent. Moments later, the next witch arrived. As soon as the first "witch's" "excess baggage" was inventoried, it was reported to Safe Haven over the radio.

It had been decided that the "excess baggage" alone might not signal double cross. It might have been their personal property. It might also have been the real witch under an imperious curse. No one truly believed that, but it was decided to be absolutely certain as once they were certain, a retaliation mission would be launched against the Ministry itself and that needed clear proof to mollify the international observers. Basically, the "witches" were being given every chance to prove they were who they were supposed to be and not a Ministry strike force.

The first witch was already in the tent when the second witch met the welcoming committee. She was directed to the table where four men were seated with some documents.

"Name?" one of the men said.

"Sharon Davis," the "witch" answered.

The man checked the list and there was indeed a witch by that name on it.

"You have a middle name?"

"Anne."

Wrong, the man thought. "Age?"

"Twenty-one."

Wrong again. "Date of birth?"

"15 May, 1973."

The idiot can't even do maths, the man thought. "Very well. First plane."

The young "witch" was escorted from the tent to one of the waiting planes. When she boarded, she was met by four people who led her to a seat and saw her strapped in. The seat belt on the bench was magical and could only be released upon a signal from the cockpit and command from one of the four escorts on the plane. Even if the cursory search had missed a wand or portkey, the witch was now under a magical suppression charm and could not do anything.

One by one the witches appeared, were disarmed and interrogated just long enough to verify suspicion. Most knew their alleged name, but little else. A few were not even that well briefed. The four men at the table in the tent happened to be fathers of some of the real witches at issue and were there as a further test. They never announced their names, but waited to see if their daughters recognized them. John Brooks was from Port of Darby and had two daughters on the list. Janice would have been 22 and had been missing six years. Pamela was 18 and had been missing for two. Both appeared before him and he did his best not to act surprised.

Neither recognized him at all, furthering the suspicion that they were fakes. Howard Ellis was from Pottersport and was also missing two daughters. Lauren was 20 and had gone missing four years ago and Mary was 17 and had been gone a year. The two girls before him did not recognize him at all, but they were or looked like his girls. At the very least, this meant they were alive somewhere. Alan Marsh was also missing two girls and they too appeared at different times in the tent. Like the others, they did not recognize their father. Finally, the last "clerk" was Air Vice Marshall Graham and the spitting image of his Martha came through the tent. She had been missing nine years, but while older was definitely recognizable. Like the others, this Martha had no knowledge she was facing her father.

The reports were sent back to Charenwell as the witches arrived. It was now clear to everyone that this was a double-cross and the real witches had not been delivered as promised. Still, there remained the question whether the intelligence was accurate. The evidence suggested that this might be an assault team, but until they hit the wards which would reveal the true identity of the witches and would certainly kill any with hostile intent, Charenwell was not going to act. Again, that was part of the plan. The evidence had to be conclusive and as overwhelming as it was, it was not yet conclusive as there could still be, as implausible as it seemed an innocent explanation and certainly one the Ministry and Daily Prophet could use. They could still deny it was an attempted attack. The conclusive evidence would be dead bodies of wizards, not witches, preferably with Dark Marks or otherwise identified as Hit Wizards, Aurors or other combat trained magicals in the Ministry's employ.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – A grove of trees approximately two kilometers east of "Capture Point" Wiltshire, U.K.

Percy Weasley had been delegated the task as the Ministry's On Scene Commander, although he was more than annoyed that this was as close as he could get without being seen. Madam Umbridge had briefed him on her plan to end the extortion and, given that it was Harry Potter who was the villain, Percy was enthusiastic. Percy had long considered the so called Boy-Who-Lived as a menace and not a hero and recent events proved his opinion correct. What arrogance to demand the Ministry pay reparations! What fool could possibly



consider those whores as worth anything! All they were good for was sex and even then, not for long. True, he had lost Penny in a card game a few months ago, but the truth be told he was already bored with her.

He thought the plan fool proof. No one would suspect a whore of anything. Why Potter wanted such things was beyond him, but Percy knew the bastard. He had enslaved Ginny out of spite after all and therefore it followed he had as little regard for the whores as anyone. The idiots would rely on the bond to keep the "whores" in line, never suspecting a thing! Once those Muggle contraptions got to wherever they were going, the idiots were in for a rude awakening and would learn that the Ministry has a long reach!

The brilliant part of the plan was the disguises. Although Percy thought it a bit wasteful, almost the entire assault force was using Auror standard Polyjuice which lasted up to eight hours a dose. There was little chance the disguises would fail before the assault team reached this Charenwell place!

And even if something did go wrong, those Muggle things could be followed couldn't they? Madam Umbridge had expanded the plan brilliantly, in Percy's opinion. With him in the woods was the Ministry's insurance policy: fifty witches and wizards with brooms who would follow those things to their home. All had at least a basic training in advanced defense. Fifty trained wands was an overwhelming force in Percy's mind. Of course Percy was not one of them. That sort of risk taking was for lower level Ministry types.

But it had never crossed his mind – or anyone else's for that matter – to bring any kind of telescopes or omnoculars. Although they could see the planes and tent clearly, no one could really tell what was happening out there. Then again, surely if those people figured it out, they'd be stunning the fake witches left and right and there was no indication that was the case. There was little indication that there was any magic at all about this. The only indication that whoever that was out there knew anything about magic were the wards that had went up just after the muggle things had landed. Percy had been told of the wards almost as soon as Magical Detection picked them up. But since then there had been no other reports of magic. That meant the

strike team was still undetected and Potter and that Charenwell place were in for a rude shock!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

"Safe Haven, Dragon Lead," the radio blared in the Operations Center.

"This is Safe Haven, over."

"Sitrep to follow: Thirty-six, I repeat three six witches arrived by timed portkey. All but eight were heavily armed and those eight all had wands. Not one passed the interviews. All have been disarmed and are aboard under magical restraint, over."

"Roger, Dragon Lead, over."

"We are starting engines. Expect to be airborne in ten minutes, over."

"Airborne in ten, roger out."

"So far so good," Remus said to Harry.

Harry nodded. "At the very least, they are in violation of our demands."

"It appears Kingsley was right."

Harry nodded again. "Probably. But we need to be sure there's no way the Ministry can sweep this under the rug. I won't give the 'go' order until the flight has crossed the wards and we have final verification."

"Agreed. But the real witches?"

"Minerva and Mallory are standing by at the Manor," Harry said. He opened a brief case with the Titles to the real witches in side. One by one, he touched his wand to the seal on each document.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

After the weeks of Bondings, the arrival of new witches at the Manor was down to a routine. Minerva and Mallory stood ready with robes knowing full well that there was no guarantee that the new arrivals would be dressed. While this was particularly true of existing Concubines, even the first timers had shown up in bathing suits, their underwear or even less.

One by one, a witch appeared in the Conservatory and was handed a robe whether she needed it or not. They were each asked their names, although many required a moment as it had been a long time since anyone had called them by their given names and twelve could not remember at all. Once the last of them arrived, Minerva called the roll just to be sure. Minerva remembered the Confiscation and remembered the smiles many of those witches had when they heard their names again. It was no different this time.

But there would be differences. Twenty-six of these witches were from Charenwell. Moreover, Harry had not yet decided anything specific about their distribution and rebonding aside from the fact that unless there was absolutely no other option, none would be bonded to him. The witches were taken to a large room and fed. They were told where they were and that unfortunately they would eventually have to be bound to a wizard. But Minerva stressed it would not be like it had been before. The laws here required such Bondings to be entered into with the intent of making the witch a wife for all practical purposes. Still, that would not be happening this day. The bond had to happen fairly soon, but not immediately. As such, the twenty-six Charenwell girls would be sent to spend time with their families if they wanted and would be advised when to expect to be bonded. Even after the bonding, they would be allowed to visit their families and be visited. As for the remaining ten, they were going to be spending their "between" time at a nearby resort. Although this introduction took a few hours, by the end of it the new arrivals seemed somewhat hopeful about their futures.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – A grove of trees approximately two kilometers east of "Capture Point" Wiltshire, U.K.

The location of the wood was such that those Muggle things would pass close by once they were in the air. That would make them easy to follow, Percy thought. He watched as one by one they came towards his position and lifted into the cloudy skies. Just as the last one passed nearby, he gave the order and fifty brooms lifted off in pursuit, although he could not see it. As important as this mission was, there was no point in alerting the Muggles. All his broom riders were disillusioned. Once he was sure they had all taken off after those things, Percy apparated back to the Ministry to report the successful start of the mission.

Those in the Ministry behind the mission were confident of success. They were sending eighty-six wands against some country somewhere which was almost like dropping all of You-Know-Who's forces from the last war onto an unsuspecting country. Voldemort had all but held Magical Britain hostage with a small force. True, aside from Umbridge's contractors, most of these wands were not trained to kill or torture. But even with non lethal spells, it should overwhelm the enemy. Surprise, after all, was on their side.

The problem with their whole plan was it had been conceived by Purebloods who knew nothing about the Muggle world and was being executed by Purebloods and Half-bloods who, if they knew anything at all, it was from their Muggle Studies courses in school which used a book that was a hundred years old meaning, among other things, the course book was silent on the subject of airplanes. None of them paid any mind to the Muggle world. Most had never even seen an airplane or if they had, they knew little about them. They assumed Muggles were simple and not capable of anything on par with magic.

They assumed, for example, that planes flew below the clouds just like brooms. Most magicals avoided the clouds as they navigated by watching the ground and one could easily get lost if one lost sight of the ground. True, some could use a "Point Me" spell if they knew where they were going. However, using that spell at more than a gentle pace risked losing the wand. The fifty brooms followed the last plane for a time, but most could not believe their eyes when it disappeared into the clouds. Twenty of the riders decided to stay below the clouds. After all, the planes made a lot of noise, so they could just follow the sound. Twenty flew into the clouds, but no higher.

Like most magicals, they wanted to be close to the "ceiling" so they could pop down and figure out where they were. Only ten enterprising souls chose to take the risk and climb as high as they could, hoping the strange things would be visible at some point.

They also assumed their brooms would be at least as fast as those huge Muggle contraptions. The Douglas Dakota had a cruising speed of about one hundred and forty knots. (160 MPH, 260 KPH) The fastest racing broom on the market could fly that fast, but few ever dared as the wind force could easily unseat the rider at those speeds. Even then, outside of professional Quidditch and a few eccentrics (and Harry Potter), no one really needed a broom that fast and few could even afford it. The chasers in this case would rapidly be out distanced by those lumbering Muggle things, and one must remember that the antiquated Dakotas were considered slow when they were in common use. Compared to more modern aircraft, they flew at a snail's pace.

The twenty who refused to fly into the cloud cover were out of the chase quickly. Within minutes, as the planes climbed to a cruising altitude more than two kilometers above them, the engine noise faded and was lost. They flew on for some time before, one by one, they gave up. The twenty who chose to follow into the clouds, but no further quickly became lost and disoriented. Twelve of them never returned and were never seen again having probably fallen or gotten lost and perished over the ocean the rest were scattered all over the south west of England. The ten who gambled and flew as high as they could cleared the cloud cover and were somewhat rewarded. They could see one of the planes far in the distance for a time and followed it to the Southwest. But it was soon too far ahead to see.

Still, this group pressed on figuring that if they stayed on the same course, they would at least wind up where the planes had went. Six of these flyers, however, were not experienced at long distance flying and certainly not over the water. By now, most of the Southwest coast of England was under heavy cloud cover and that cover extended well out to sea. The six inexperienced distance fliers never counted on the effects of wind and were slowly blown well off course. They were never seen again. The remaining four, however, knew to adjust for the wind. They were not particularly accurate, but were

close enough to stay roughly on the right course. Because they were disillusioned, none of these four could see any of the others so none would be forewarned of what lay ahead. Roughly four hours later, the fastest of the four hit the Ward line. His charm failed as did his heart. He was already quite dead as he fell off his broom and plunged 2500 meters to the ocean below. Two of his comrades suffered a similar and anonymous fate some minutes later. The last of the four arrived at the ward line about an hour after the others. Like the others, her disillusionment charm failed, but she was otherwise unharmed and suddenly she saw a large landmass in the distance.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – The Burrow, Ottery St. Catchpole, Devon, U.K.

In some ways having a bitch did not change Ron Weasley's summer routine all that much. As he had for as long as he could remember, he slept in late. Back when Harry had stayed for the final days of the summer before returning to Hogwarts, it seemed the Weasley's always arrived at Kings Cross minutes before the train arrived. Yes, the day was chaos at the Weasley home, but getting Ron out of bed was a major factor in their arrival time.

Ron almost always awoke with a major hard on which, as long as he was alone in his room, he took care of if he could. If not, he took a piss then finished the job. After a good morning hand job, he would head down for a large, multi-helping breakfast and spend his summer days ignoring homework, flying his broom or otherwise doing as little as possible.

Of course, now that he had a bitch, he no longer had to handle his morning wood himself. Once he got up, he'd go to her room where she was waiting for him naked and she would take care of his problem for him. And if his problem was related to his bladder? Well, she was not one to complain and she knew cleaning charms. To be honest, he liked using her that way.

On this morning he awoke as usual with a need for his bitch's services and walked to his room, dropping his pajama bottoms to the floor just before entering so she would get to her knees and perform her morning duties. He opened the door to her room and saw that it

was empty. He quickly pulled up his bottoms and began searching wondering why the bitch was hiding. It was soon evident she was not in the room. Well, her orders were clear. The only other place she was allowed to be at this hour was the bathroom so he went there. Again, she was nowhere to be found.

Ron came down the stairs with a very confused look on his face and saw his mother in the kitchen.

"Mum?" he asked, "have you seen my bitch?"

"She was in her room when I got up Ronald," Molly said with a hint of disgust in her voice. "As usual, she has not come down yet."

"Well, she's nowhere upstairs now!" Ron whined.

"I'm sure she's up there somewhere, Ronald."

"Fine!" Ron mumbled. He stomped upstairs to look for her and would not find her anywhere.

Molly watched her son head up stairs. She was fairly sure the bond would prevent the whore from running off. Then again, she did not know exactly how absolute that bond was and given how his son treated the bint, it would not surprise Molly in the least if she ran off. The boy would probably let the bint starve if Molly had not insisted on making sure her basic needs were taken care of. Merlin help whatever girl that would agree to marry that boy!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Aboard Dragon 4 over the Atlantic.

Once it had been decided to disarm the potential attack force on the ground, there had been some debate about whether to use the Twins new toys. It was decided that they would be used once the planes were in the air. The stunner would keep the witches out cold for at least three hours unless the counter charm was cast. Stunning them would keep them from causing a ruckus, if nothing else. Then again, no one knew exactly what the Wards would do, aside from kill those who and hostile intent. They did not know how the demise would occur and it was decided it was best that the invaders be

unconscious when that time arrived. No sense in having them suffer unnecessarily.

A red light went on in the back of the plane and it caught Fred Weasley's attention.

"Five minutes to the Wards," he called out. This warning was mainly to make sure the four in the back were awake when the line was crossed. A green light would come on when they were a minute out. Fred knew there would not be much for them to do in all probability until after the Wards were crossed. The light turned green and he and the others watched the twelve stunned witches. Eight of them suddenly convulsed and all of them began to transform. They grew or shrank in size and their features morphed as their magical disguises were stripped away. The eight who physically reacted were now wizards in drag slumped in their seats. The other four remained witches, but they were not the same four who had boarded the plane.

Fred and the others walked forward and began to check out their passengers one by one. Fred started with one of the wizards. He cast the charm designed to counter the effects of the stun grenade which should have revived the man. After there was no response, Fred checked for a pulse and found there was not one. He then pointed his wand at the dead man's left arm and vanished the long sleeve. There on the left arm was a black skull with a snake for a tongue: the Dark Mark. The dead man was a Death Eater. It turned out all eight of the dead wizards were Death Eaters. Fred recognized three of them. Marcus Flint and Adrian Pucey had both been Slytherins at Hogwarts while Fred was a student. The third man he recognized was an employee of the Ministry of Magic and fairly high up in Magical Law Enforcement. He did not know the man's first name, but the last name was so weird it was hard to forget: Yaxley. Grimly, the only thought that crossed Fred's mind was to wonder if he could see thestrals now.

The four witches were awake and very confused. They were all Muggle Borns working in low level jobs and the Ministry who had been promised promotions if they assisted their betters on an important assignment. That's what their bosses told them at any rate. All four told Fred and the others that they had a meeting with the



head of Magical Law Enforcement himself saying they were really there to watch the others as he suspected the others and their bosses were engaging in illegal activities. The four witches were informed that they had been part of an operation that would be considered an act of war by any rational and civilized country and as such, until their true status was determined, they should consider themselves prisoners of war. They naturally protested and were somewhat assured that this mess would be sorted out when they arrived at someplace called Pottersport.

All of these revelations were reported to the flight crew who dutifully reported it to "Safe Haven."

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Aboard Dragon Lead over the Atlantic.

While Dragon Lead had been the first plane to arrive in England, it was the last to take off again. It was a good ten minutes behind Dragon 1 and even further behind the other two. Unlike the three planes that departed before it, none of the "witches" were aboard Dragon Lead. While the other planes were starting engines and preparing for takeoff, the ground personnel who arrived on Dragon Lead were taking down the magical tent and packing up for departure. They did nothing about the Wards they erected to protect the landing site as those were timed to fail in about three hours.

Dora was aboard Dragon Lead as it took off. In that plane they had gathered all the magical items confiscated from the "witches" and she was currently assigned to check them out. The potions would have to wait until they got back home. The wands were easy enough to check, but it was the emergency portkeys that she gave top priority. She knew how to diagnose such things from Auror training and quickly determined that all of them were DMLE standard issue. This meant they could be activated by either a code word or simply with the wand of any team member if the user was unable to activate it themselves. As it was DMLE issue, the portkeys would transport the person to a large room in the ministry where Healers were usually stationed to treat the injured. This information was duly reported Safe Haven.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Aboard Dragon 2 over the Atlantic.

Dragon 2 was the third plane to leave England and was now approaching the Charenwell ward line. They were unaware as to what had happened aboard the two planes in front of them. Dragon 3 had already crossed the line and reported in. Eight of their passengers were Death Eaters and they all snuffed it. Four of those were Aurors assigned to Azkaban including the Warden. Two of the survivors were Muggle Born witches and the other two were a witch and a wizard who, it was correctly assumed, wanted little to do with this assignment.

George Weasley was standing watching the twelve unconscious "witches" as the green light came on. He was not too worried as they would have received a warning of some kind if something unexpected had occurred on the planes in front of them. As his brother had witnessed before, all of a sudden all twelve began to transform and eight went into some kind of convulsion. But it was the thud behind him that caught his attention as well as the attention of the other three with him.

They turned and saw there was a fourth person with them who obviously had not been aboard at any point before. This was somewhat confusing as no one could apparate onto the plane and the wards on the door prevented anyone under disillusionment from remaining unseen. The person was clearly shaken up as if she had fallen, for it was clearly a witch. Before she could regain her senses, one of the others had acted quickly, summoned her wand and slapped magical suppression cuffs on her before roughly lifting her and tossing her into an empty seat, belting her in as she came around. George nodded to the other two to check out the other "witches." Eight clearly were not witches and seven of those along with one witch were dead. Four of them were Death Eaters. George, however, was more interested in the stowaway who looked familiar for some reason.

Her eyes opened in surprise and she looked at George.

"Name!" he commanded.

"Who are you?"

"Charenwell Security Forces. You are part of an illegal criminal enterprise! Name!"

"I'm a member of the press," she protested. "The people have a right..."

"You are not authorized to be here," George all but yelled. "No tell me your name! You don't, and we'll chuck you out the door! We're over 2,000 meters above the ocean and you can't apparate home from here!"

The woman seemed to realize she was in serious trouble. "Rita Skeeter, Daily Prophet," she replied.

"How did you come to be aboard this plane?"

"I have my ways," she said.

"You're wearing magical suppression cuffs and I have no problem chucking you out the door. You'll be feeding the fishes in minutes! Now how did you come to be aboard this plane?"

"I – I'm an animagus."

"Really? Didn't see any critters aboard. What form? Remember I will chuck you!"

"A beetle," she replied.

"Well that explains a lot," George said.

"You will let me leave, won't you?" she said sweetly.

"Let's see," George said. "You have no passport or visa to enter. You did not reveal your form upon entering this plane. You are British, are you not?"

"Of course," she said proudly.

"And you're an enemy alien. You'll be incarcerated until such time as our government tires of your presence."

"This is outrageous! I'm a member of the press!"

"You have two choices. You will accept incarceration without further protest, or I chuck you out the door!"

The woman sat back in resignation. All of this was reported to Safe Haven.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

Harry was again in the tower only minutes after Dragon 2 reported its successful crossing of the Ward Line. He was not nearly as worried about Dragon Lead as they had no hostiles aboard. Like the others, he was scanning the cloudy skies to the north east waiting for a glimpse of the returning planes.

"Pottersport Control, this is Dragon 4. We are ten miles out. Request clearance for landing."

"Dragon 4, Pottersport Control. The pattern is clear and you're cleared to land on runway two four."

"Runway two four, Roger out."

Harry soon saw the landing lights as the plane descended below the clouds a few miles out on its final approach. He was almost ready to finally relax. But, although he was confident the plane would land safely, there was always a chance and this whole operation and been causing him to worry. That and there were three planes behind still out there. He watched as Dragon 4 made a smooth landing.

"Pottersport Control, this is Dragon 3. We are ten miles out. Request clearance for landing."

"Dragon 3, Pottersport Control. The pattern is clear and you're cleared to land on runway two four."

"Runway two four, Roger out."

At one forty-five in the afternoon, Dragon Lead touched down. The mission that had worried Harry to no end had reached a safe and successful conclusion. But there was still more to be done this day.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – The Burrow, Ottery St. Catchpole, Devon, U.K.

"I can't find her anywhere, Mum!" Ron whined again.

"Well don't blame me," Molly said. "It's not my fault you don't take good care of your pets."

"What's that mean?"

"She's probably run off," Molly said. "Good riddance as far as I'm concerned."

"How am I supposed to get laid?"

"That is not my problem, young man! If that's the only way you'll get a girl, then you'd better learn how to treat them better! And no! I won't buy you another one!"

Ron stomped off to his room to sulk and take care of his boy problem himself.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

Twenty-four bodies were laid out in a hanger. All of them had their left arms bared and twenty of those had the Dark Mark. Harry and a large group set about doing their best to identify the corpses. Six Death Eaters were identified as the Warden and senior guards from Azkaban. Two were Ministry employees and the other twelve had no known connection to the Ministry. Four of them looked far too young to have been involved in the last war and were believed to be recent recruits. The four unmarked bodies were also Ministry employees who were known to be Pureblood bigots.

The twelve survivors, plus Rita Skeeter, were undergoing interrogation in another room. Ultimately, aside from Skeeter, those twelve would be found to have not been a threat to Harry or anyone in Charenwell. The eight Muggle Born witches had been sent here to escape magical Britain and knew that. All eight would be allowed to remain as political refugees. Of the remaining three, they were either last minute additions to the force and had little idea what was really going on or had been under the Imperious Curse following a meeting with the Death Eater named Yaxley. One witch requested asylum and the other three requested to be returned home as they had a spouse and children back in Britain. Those requests would be granted.

First, however, there was the question of Charenwell's response. The Ministry had failed to comply with their reasonable requests. This information was immediately forward to Gringotts which promptly emptied 4.2 million galleons from the Ministry vaults and placed it in a "neutral" vault until such time as the reparations received final approval from the I.C.W. Phillip Delacour was fairly certain that would occur within a week. Harry made an additional demand for another 4.2 million in reparation for the act of war perpetrated upon his country. The fact that it was an abysmal failure did not change what it was and he wanted magical Britain to pay. Mr. Delacour was not as certain that the I.C.W. would approve the entire amount of the new demand, but he was confident that further sanctions would be approved.

From Kingsley, they knew who came up with the idea for the double cross and who ordered it. Harry was advised that direct action against Fudge or Scrimgeour probably would not be looked upon kindly by the I.C.W. Umbridge was another matter. While she might have political pull in Britain, she was not considered a senior government official under I.C.W. rules. Taking action against her would be viewed as a personal feud and neither a political assassination or act of war on Charenwell's part. Mr. Delacour's analysis confirmed what Hermione had already concluded from her research.

Where this just about Umbridge and Harry, neither Harry nor Hermione felt any further direct action was appropriate. But she had sent an assault force packed with Death Eaters, all of whom were murders. She was not just a pain in Harry's arse, but a threat to

peace! When Harry suggested that he believed she should be taken out permanently, Mr. Delacour merely shrugged. "Whether or not she is a pawn in fact," he said, "she is worth no more. Pawns are meant to be sacrificed." Hermione had been reluctant to agree to a retaliatory attack, but understood that one was justified. Whether the Minister intended it or not, the Ministry had sent a Death Eater hit squad against their country. This showed a complete disregard for innocent casualties and such brutal arrogance had to be addressed in no uncertain terms. The decision had already been made with only confirmation that the Death Eater attack had been launched necessary for Charenwell to respond. Harry told Hermione to make the call.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Potter Manor Charenwell.

Version two of Thursday Harry already knew the call was coming. He could have set out already on this mission, but with the foreign dignitaries at the Air Base, it was decided to do it this way. A version two of Dora was with him. Arguably, the first Harry and Dora could have gone, but both had been up since well before dawn and were knackered. What was about to happen required both to have their wits about them while the Version Ones remained at the base to await further reports.

The phone in Harry's office rang and he picked it up. He already knew it was Hermione.

"It's a go," she said.

Harry nodded and sighed. "You understand why I have to do this, don't you?"

"I do," she replied. "That doesn't mean I have to like it."

"I'll be back shortly, Love," Harry said.

"Please?" she all but begged. "Good luck and be safe."

"Love you."

"Love you too, Harry." With that, Hermione hung up.

"Ready?" he asked the Dora he was with. She nodded. She handed Harry a Sig-Sauer P-226 pistol they had trained with the past couple of days with the non-magical soldiers and checked hers over again before placing it in her holster. Harry did not like this mission. Much as he hated the object of it, this was not personal. They had threatened his country and his people and needed to learn such behavior had permanent consequences. More important, he knew war was all but inevitable and he could not in good conscious order people to do things he was unwilling or unable to do himself.

"Let's get this over with," she said when both guns were holstered. She took Harry by the hand, both of them drew their wands and the two of them disappeared.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Office of the Senior Undersecretary to the Minister for Magic, British Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

Dolores Umbridge was in a good mood. Soon that Potter brat would be dead or their prisoner and the Ministry could get back to business. With Potter out of the picture, his votes would go into proxy and the quorum issue could be resolved without filling the Wizengamot and Ministry with those filthy animals. She was gloating over her genius with two of her Death Eater contacts, those who arranged their little surprise. With her as well was Percy Weasley who was reporting on the successful launch of the mission. This was a glorious day for the Ministry and for Dolores Umbridge in particular. Again, she underestimated her enemy's potential. She was certain her office was secure as the Ministry was under powerful wards designed to prevent unauthorized access by floo, apparition or portkey. She never heard the two intruders arrive, but saw them almost immediately. The other three had their backs to the intruders but before Umbridge could say a word, spells flew and she and her guests were bound with ropes and silenced. She then heard the incantations that barred the door and silenced the room. How could Potter be here?



"Accio wands," Harry said and four wands were soon in his hands. "What do you think, Dora? Do these scum deserve the right to use magic?"

"Nope," Dora replied. With that Harry snapped all four wands and tossed them on Umbridge's death smiling and the lovely shades of color that passed over the bitch's face. Quietly, he hoped she's have a stroke and die, but she didn't do him the favor.

"Check the scum for marks," Harry ordered.

Umbridge watched as a woman she thought was an Auror cut the sleeves from the left arms of the three men in her office.

"These two are marked," the woman said. "Ginger here is clean."

"You may be giving him more credit than he is due," Harry said. He turned to Umbridge pulling out a sheet of paper as he did.

"You really are an idiot," he said. "Your plan was moronic and a total failure."

Umbridge did not believe this for a second. Her plan was foolproof.

"Of the thirty-six you tried to sneak past us as Concubines, twenty-four are dead and the rest are in our custody and shall remain in custody indefinitely," Harry said. "None of the Death Eaters survived your foolish attempt. Of the fifty you sent out on brooms, twenty-eight never left England. The remainder, I am advised are missing and presumed dead. Nice job throwing away fifty-eight lives. The bodies we've recovered will be transported to the Atrium in a few minutes. We suffered no casualties. And by the way, the real witches you were supposed to return to us we managed to recover ourselves. Four point two Millions Galleons have been confiscated from Ministry vaults and a further demand for another similar amount has been forwarded to the I.C.W. and your government.

"In case you are wondering, what happens next has already been approved by the I.C.W. You sent Death Eaters against my country, bitch. You will now learn the penalty for being a marked Death Eater!"

Harry pulled out his pistol, pointed it at the nearest Death Eater's head and pulled the trigger. The bang was almost deafening in the confined space and Umbridge was sprayed with the dead man's blood and brains. The second Death Eater was shot and killed seconds later. Percy soiled himself.

"My government will not offer mercy or quarter to those diseased creatures," Harry spat. "For them, death is the only reasonable option."

"Now for the real reason we're here," Harry continued as if nothing had happened. He knew this was making a statement. Using a Muggle Firearm against a wizard was almost as serious a crime under British Magical law as using and unforgivable. "In case you are wondering, guns are not illegal where I come from. They also tend to be unnecessary. This is retaliation for an act of War on the part of you and your government. You should be thankful we are holding back!

"Dolores Umbridge, I Harry the First, Duke of Charenwell, Count of Darby, Magical Justice of the Peace by virtue of ancient Writ granted to my forefathers the Earls of Darby by the Crown, do hereby find you guilty of the unlawful use of witchcraft and sorcery in violation of the Queen's Peace!"

He watched the witch pale. To at least some old Pureblood families, the Earl of Darby was the boogie man. They believed falsely that it was a Muggle. But the Earl or Earls were known to have been ruthless and very effective witch and wizard hunters for whom mercy was not a word in their vocabulary.

"I further find that you employed criminals, supported terrorism and authorized crimes with the intent of causing grievous bodily harm or death to unknown numbers of innocents. You are found guilty of such aggravating circumstances. You are hereby sentenced to death. Sentence to be carried out immediately!"

Harry and Dora pointed their guns at the toad and began shooting. They did not stop until both guns had been emptied.

Percy looked like he was going to be sick. Harry looked at him. "What a pity," he said. "Out of bullets. Come Dora. Let's go home."

Percy saw them vanish without a sound and immediately was released from the magical ropes and silencing charm. While he knew he should be raising some alarm, his stomach would not let him. He spent the next several minutes throwing up.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

The phone rang in the Operations Center and Hermione picked it up. "We're back," Harry said in a strange tone.

"You okay?"

"It wasn't pretty or enjoyable," Harry sighed. "The wicked witch is dead and we bagged two more Death Eaters, still..."

"Harry?"

"I'll be okay. Percy Weasley was there as well."

"Is he...?"

"He was not marked. We let him go."

"What should I tell the other you?"

"Only that the mission was a success. I don't think I could have done it knowing this in advance. It was necessary..."

"I know," Hermione said softly. "I still don't have to like it."

"Fortunately, neither do I," Harry said. "I guess I'll see you in a bit."

"See you," Hermione replied with a tear in her voice.

Her name was Amy Fudge. She was twenty-four years old and the only child of the still sitting Minister for Magic. In her father's eyes, she was a disappointment. Her father had been Head Boy at

Hogwarts and a Slytherin. While she did well in school, she was a Hufflepuff and turned down being a Prefect after her father had lobbied Dumbledore and made a large donation to the school to ensure his daughter would become one. Her father wanted her to marry a "good" Pureblood. Amy refused saying she would rather be a Concubine than the wife of a Death Eater family. He forced her to join the Ministry, which she never wanted. But it was either that or the arranged Marriage. Still, Daddy could not make her move beyond her entry level position as a clerk.

She was sure her Daddy was the reason why she had received this assignment. She was to fly off over the ocean for some fool reason and she was certain her Daddy hoped she would die. He would make political capital out of her death on an important Ministry mission. But she had not died. She made it to wherever this was and was now flying her broom over a place filled with those Muggle things, including ones that looked like what she and the others were supposed to be chasing. She landed right in front of several people and saw them draw wands and other things on her.

"I don't know where this is," she said as bravely as she could muster, "but I request political asylum."

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8th, 1996 – Atrium, British Ministry of Magic, London, U.K.

Both Fudge and Scrimgeour were stunned at what they soon learned. Not only was Umbridge's plan an absolute failure, they now had to worry about their own security. To have a Senior Under Secretary murdered in her office just doors away from the Minister's office and to have the perpetrators get away was disturbing. Not even the Death Eaters were that good. Fudge figured that they might make some political capital. Umbridge was murdered by a muggle weapon in the Ministry itself by Harry Potter no less. Surely the press would eat that up.

The two men arrived in the Atrium and saw the press taking pictures of something. They were told those were the bodies of Death Eaters that had been killed in the raid. Before they could take two more steps, the press descended on them with a vengeance.

"How long have you been employing Death Eaters to do your dirty work?"

"How do you justify fifty-one dead and missing when all you had to do was turn over those women?"

"How long has You-Know-Who been controlling you?"

"Was Umbridge a Death Eater too?"

"What are you going to tell the families of those who died today?"

"When did you get authority to go to war?"

"Are you in league with You-Know-Who?"

"Are you going to apologize to Lord Potter for this?"

"WHAT?" Fudge yelled. "HE KILLED MADAM UMBRIDGE AND TWO OTHERS WITH A GUN!"

"And we have sources telling us that was after you began your disastrous undeclared war on him and his country! What were you thinking?"

"When are you going to resign?"

"Are you going to continue to use known murders to do your dirty work?"

"Minister Fudge! Did you know your daughter has defected to Charenwell? Do you have any comment?"

"HE USED A GUN!"

"Yet you would employ those who use unforgivables on innocent people! You start a war and you don't expect the other side to relate?"

"Your own people are saying this was Umbridge's crazy idea! Why didn't you sack her? Why didn't you rein her in? Who the hell is in charge here?"

"The I.C.W. has announced it will impose sanctions on us for this. Any comment?"

"Have you been told Rita Skeeter was taken prisoner?"

Fudge paled. As bad as this press assault had been, he had not worried. While Skeeter's poisoned quill might have been on ice for a year for reasons he was never told, she had so much dirt on people, particularly the editors of the Daily Prophet, that she effectively could control what the paper printed and since she was in Fudge's pocket in more ways than one, she had almost always followed whatever line he wanted. If she was truly out of the picture, this day was truly a nightmare.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).

2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.

3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (Ra-2).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).

14. Francine Sally (Broadmoor) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).
16. Bonnie Faith Carter, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).
16. Su Li, age 16 (Ra-5).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine Peters, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).



George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Alice Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura Carpenter, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE: INTERESTING ALLIES

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

As dawn broke on Friday morning, the full impacts of the events of August 8th were yet to be known by anyone. For Harry, it was the second day following his little mission to the Ministry and the third since the operation that destroyed the Ministry's plans while bringing the last of the Charenwell witches home as well as ten others. The final disposition of those witches was yet to be made. While Remus and Stephanie Lupin and Frank and Alice Longbottom had agreed to assist and would accept up to ten new bondings each, that left sixteen unclaimed witches to deal with. Harry knew that Arthur Weasley was due to arrive on Saturday and also knew from Bill that Arthur had divorced his wife of twenty-eight years meaning he might be persuaded, but that was by no means certain. All the Charenwell Weasleys had already agreed to convince their Dad to help and Ginny had been hard at work with Hermione, Luna, Connie, and both the Greengrass sisters and Patil twins organizing a presentation as to why this would benefit him, his family and the girls in question.

There were ten other new witches who had asked to remain here in Charenwell. Nine had been sent in disguise as part of an assault force they either did not know much about or were morally opposed to in the first place. A tenth was the only broom rider to make it from England and was the daughter of the lame duck Minister for Magic. None of these women would become Concubines here and to ensure they could never become one, they had all been taken under the protection of House Potter. Amy Fudge was currently and Mistress Agnes Hospital in Pottersport recovering from the effects of mild hypothermia. The other eight were staying at the new resort near Potter Manor until their futures and new accommodations could be sorted out. There was a tenth witch as well. Rita Skeeter was currently being held in a secure room at Government House as a Hostile Prisoner, the first prisoner of any description held by the Charenwell government in 157 years.

As dawn was breaking on what would be Harry's first time through Friday, he was still doing his best to put the stressful events of Thursday behind him. Following the air mission day, he had spent the

night with Hermione and Tabatha. Following the Umbridge day, it was Luna and Ginny, whose attentions he really appreciated as they had been through "the wars" themselves. Right now, he was making up a "wedding" night with "Little" Laura and the two were sound asleep in each other's arms.

He had begun calling her "Little" Laura at dinner following her bonding. It was, in a way, fitting. Harry now had two Lauras after all. The other Laura was eight years older, four inches taller and had larger boobs as Little Laura was only slightly larger than Astoria. She did not mind her new nickname at all. She might be the youngest and smallest in the House, but she loved having Harry in her as much as any of the girls and had spent last night proving it to Harry yet again. For now, the two were cuddled together and sleeping. Little Laura was dreaming of her wonderful new life and as strange as it was how it really was a dream come true. Harry was dreaming of Dragon Surfing, a sport invented in his dreams where one stood atop a flying dragon and tried not to fall off. He was pretty good at it. His dragon was twisting and turning through the streets of London when suddenly it shot up really high and Harry actually fell off! Naturally, this caused Harry to awake almost immediately.

"Mister Harry, Sir," a voice whispered. Harry could make out the form of an elf.

"Dobby?"

The elf nodded. "Begging your forgiveness, Sir, but there's a visitor downstairs."

"At this hour?"

"He is most apologetic about that, Sir. He just ... well his wife and he ..."

"Perhaps I should see them?"

"That would be best, Sir."

Reluctantly, Harry crawled from the very warm bed hoping that he would not awake Little Laura, but certain that his absence would not go unnoticed by his newest "wife." She did stir and asked what was happening. He told her what he knew, which was not much and apologized profusely for needing to end their "wedding night" earlier than planned. She surprised him by getting up as well and by not being put out. She said that even though it had only been a couple of days (for her) she knew he had responsibilities and such. That she had him all to herself for two nights was more than she could ask and so long as their times together were special, the fact that she would not have him all the time was not so important. Harry was grateful for her appearance of understanding and made sure she was duly rewarded in the shower.

Dressed and still somewhat annoyed that his morning ended so early, Harry descended the stairs to the Ground Floor where these visitors were waiting. They were seated in the Conservatory and rose as he approached.

Charlie Weasley was twenty-three years old. The second son of Arthur and Molly Weasley, he had entered Hogwarts in September of 1984. His older brother Bill was destined to become a very respected prefect and later Head Boy. Charlie was not interested in what he saw as accolades that would convince his Mother he had a career in government. Sitting at a desk writing memos on Cauldron thickness did not seem like an appealing life even when he was a boy. He wanted something more invigorating.

He thought he found it Second Year. That year he made the Gryffindor Quidditch Team as one of the youngest players in years. He played Seeker and was considered one of the best, certainly the best anyone remembered wearing the Scarlet and Gold of his House. He was always fond of Quidditch and loved playing. He became the team Captain in his Fifth Year but much to the dismay of his house gave up Quidditch his final year to focus on his N.E.W.T.s. By then he knew he had no desire to play professionally and the only real reason to play in the hardest year of school was in the hopes that a scout would offer a contract.

Still, he was proud of his time on the team. Gryffindor won the Quidditch Cup twice, once during his Second Year and once during his Fourth Year. Were it not for a lucky Bludger that knocked rookie Oliver Wood out in the opening minutes of Charlie's debut as Captain his Fifth Year in the only game they lost, they might well have won it again. In his Sixth Year and final year on the team, he knew it was unlikely they could manage to win the Cup. Only he and Oliver remained from the year before as the rest of the team either finished school or quit to focus on their O.W.L.s or N.E.W.T.s. Still, they did finish second, which was a lot better than Charlie had hoped when he formed the team the preceding fall. To be honest, he doubted that had he been Captain his final year he would have made much of a difference. Wood was the only player who returned from the prior year. While the Seeker who replaced Charlie was pathetic, the truth was it was the youngest Gryffindor team since the 1974-1975 season. Wood was Captain as a Fourth Year because he was the most experienced and oldest player the House had. The guy also was a walking encyclopedia of the game.

Of course, by Seventh Year Charlie had far more on his mind than just his N.E.W.T.s. The summer before he had a long talk with his Dad and Bill and knew he wanted a job like Bill's waiting for him when he finished. He was not interested in being a Curse Breaker. That was not his passion. What he wanted was a job overseas and preferably far enough from Britain that it would be difficult for him to return for a visit and, more importantly, difficult for his mother to visit him. Over time he had come to want to be as far from her as possible, just as Bill had. And just as with Bill, she was giving him all sorts of unsolicited career advice. She felt with his O.W.L.s, particularly his high honors in Care of Magical Creatures, the only job appropriate for him was in the Care and Regulation of Magical Creatures Department. Charlie thought that department was more of a useless joke than his Dad's job, although he held his tongue. Without her knowing, he applied for a position as a Research Assistant and Ranger at the Wallachia Dragon Preserve in Romania, the most prestigious magical wild life preserve in Europe and, to his amazement, was accepted even before he sat for his N.E.W.T.s. When he finished Hogwarts, he went home for only a couple of days, mostly to say goodbye to the "good Weasleys," Dad, Fred, George and Ginny and pack his stuff. His mother was told about his job ten minutes before his portkey was

due to activate, which was almost as much time as Bill had given her to get used to the idea he was leaving for Egypt and would not consider a job at the Ministry.

Charlie did not hate his mother. He, like Bill and others, however did find her very controlling. She had a view of the perfect life and family and that view was not shared by many others, not even her husband. Arthur handled the situation by retreating to his shed and his ever growing collection of Muggle things, which Molly found sufficiently disturbing not to bother him when he was out there. The children were not so lucky. She wanted them all to work for the Ministry just as her brothers had and to respect the ideals she and her brothers had held dear, namely whatever the agenda was of one Albus Dumbledore. Neither Charlie nor Bill could stand their former Headmaster although they never expressed that opinion to their mother. Their father was sympathetic, but was not willing to make a scene either. He was the one to recommend Bill take a position as a Curse Breaker rather than become an Auror as Molly wanted.

Charlie left Britain in July of 1991 and never truly looked back. He returned only once when his Reserve was asked to supply four dragons for a tournament at Hogwarts. He was only there for about two weeks and avoided his mother the whole time claiming he was far too busy for a visit, which was mostly true. When the news broke overseas the summer before that Voldemort had returned, Charlie had received a long letter from his mother stating it was his duty to come home and join the Order of the Phoenix. He found that odd. He knew what the Order was and he also knew neither of his parents were members the last time around. Molly's two older brothers were. Charlie remembered Fabian and Gideon Prewett, but he was only six when they died on an assignment from Dumbledore. What he had heard from his father was that the Order had suffered high losses during the last War. Arthur and Molly had joined up this time, but that was mostly at Molly's insistence and, Arthur believed, mainly to convince the others to join when they were older. In separate letters Arthur implored his two oldest boys to stay where they were if they could. Arthur, apparently, did not trust Dumbledore with their lives.

Bill had returned home. This was not in response to his mother's letters; rather it was a routine transfer by his employer, Gringotts

Bank. He had written Charlie to warn that their mother was most insistent about his joining the Order, but that he had told her he could not join and work for Gringotts as it was considered a conflict of interest. Dumbledore himself had tried to recruit Bill as there were no true Curse Breakers under his control. Bill made it clear he would not leave his job unless he was guaranteed a salary in excess of what he was currently making. Apparently, compensation was not something the Order did. Their mother had been furious claiming it was an honor to work with Dumbledore for "The Greater Good." Bill was unmoved, apparently.

Charlie flat out refused to come home. Dealing with Dragons seemed a far better use of his time than what the Order apparently did which struck him as sitting around waiting to get killed or worse. Besides, he was not about to leave Tatiana and he knew his mother would not accept his girlfriend. She was not a Pureblood, not from a wealthy family and not British.

He was still debating if that had been the best of ideas as he rode in the talons of a dragon west from Romania. True, for whatever reason, the dragons had seen to their basic needs and aside from desperately needing a wash, he and his Tatiana were fine. He still had wondered where the dragons were going. Yesterday around dawn he figured they had stopped in a remote area in northwest Spain neat the Atlantic Coast. What he knew of Horntails told him this was way outside of their traditional range. Last night, not long after sunset, he and Tatiana were collected again and they flew out to sea on a course he reckoned was west by northwest. He knew enough about geography to know that there was nothing out there. On this course, the dragons would not find land again for well over a full day at their normal cruising speed and then it would be North America. To his surprise, they landed before dawn on a large lawn surrounded on three sides by what looked like a palace.

Not long after dawn it seemed that the dragons, all of whom were now gathered on the large law, let Charlie and Tatiana go. They walked towards the entrance of the palace before them, both confused by this recent development. On either side of the large door which stood open were two nervous looking hippogriffs who eyed the dragons with concern. After bowing to the proud creatures and

receiving bows in return, Charlie and Tatiana passed through the doors where they were met by a being neither recognized. It had elf like features, but was taller.

The being introduced himself as Darda, Head of Staff and asked their names and their business. Their names were easy. As for their business, Charlie told Darda of their recent adventures in brief and stated he really had no idea why they were there. The two of them were asked to wait in "The Conservatory" which was a large open area with tropical plants and chairs and such. Another elf like creature offered them tea while they waited. After several days of just water, tea seemed like such a luxury, as did the food that came with it which was neither dragon roasted mutton or venison.

Soon, a young man approached them from a broad and winding stair that led up into this palace. He was not alone for at least four women were with him. Given the hour, Charlie was surprised to see they were dressed and not in their night clothes. It was only when they were close that he recognized any of them and at first only one.

"Ginny?" he asked looking at the red haired young woman who was approaching. It looked like her, but Ginny never had clothes like that before.

"Charlie?" she asked in reply.

Charlie nodded and the red haired girl all but launched herself at the surprised Dragon Handler throwing her arms around him, but only briefly. She pulled back and looked at him.

"Merlin, you're a mess!" she said. "Do they even bathe in Romania?"

"Sorry Squirt," Charlie said. "Been traveling a while and bathing was not on the schedule. Been so long I've hardly noticed."

"Well, we'll see you fixed up in no time."

"What are you doing here?" Charlie asked. "And where is here, by the way?"



"When was the last time you heard from home?" Ginny asked.

"Um," Charlie thought, "beginning of July I think. Bill dropped me a note saying he and Fleur were moving out of Britain again."

Ginny nodded. "A lot has happened since then," Ginny said. "From our perspective it all began July 10th at the reading of the Last Will and Testament of Sirius Black."

"He's dead?"

"You really have been out of touch," Ginny chided. She then introduced Charlie to the others. With her were Harry Potter, who was almost unrecognizable without his characteristic glasses and scar, Hermione Potter, Luna Black and Cissy Black. Ginny then introduced herself to Tatiana, who had not been introduced yet and Charlie was stunned when she said she was Ginny Potter. She then told Charlie and abbreviated version of Weasley Clan history since July 10th including how she became a Concubine and then wife of Harry Potter, the growth of the Potter/Black Coven(s), the relocation of Bill, Fred and George to this place and their now very large families and the word they had received about the divorce of their parents.

"Are ... are you okay with this, Gin?" Charlie asked cautiously.

"Very much so," she replied cheerfully. "We'd all love to have more time with Harry, but aside from that it's wonderful. In many ways it's a girl's dream come true. And who's this?"

"Sorry," Charlie said. "Forgot my manners over the past few days." Charlie introduced them to his wife and Consort and told Ginny (mainly) how and when they met.

"What brings you all the way from Romania?" Harry asked speaking for the first time.

"Dragons," Charlie replied.

"Well, I can assure you, Sir, our colonies of Charenwell Reds are quite happy where they are and I have no intention of having any of them carted off to a zoo."

"Charenwell Reds?" Charlie asked. "You think we're looking for ...? I guess I can see that. You misunderstood me. We were brought here by dragons."

"Really?" Harry asked almost in disbelief. Dragons were not known to bring people anywhere, except as a meal, at least as far as Harry knew.

"They're outside," Charlie said. "I mean they were when we came in. They might have left..." he shrugged. He then explained what had happened to him and Tatiana over the last several days, although unintentionally he left out the specific breed of dragon.

"Interesting," Harry said when Charlie was done. "Someone please get Gabrielle up. I'm sure our hippogriff friends need an explanation even if the dragons are gone." Charlie saw the older woman named Cissy nod and leave. "Now let's see what there is to see," Harry said to those who remained.

Harry and the others walked to the front door of the manor and as Harry stepped out he stopped. On the huge lawn that he thought of as the Pitch were more dragons than he could have imagined. There were, in fact, thirty-six dragons, almost all of which appeared to be sunning themselves or otherwise asleep. Only a handful seemed to notice Harry and the others stepping out of the manor including the largest of the lot. Harry knew what kind they were. They were all jet black, large and vicious looking with a spiked tail that looked dangerous. He had faced one of these before. As far as Harry was concerned, facing one Hungarian Horntail even in moderately favorable conditions was one too many. If these dragons meant trouble, there was little he could do. Then again, wouldn't the wards have prevented them from ever arriving here if they meant harm? And how the bloody hell would they ever know one way or another.

Charlie was near him and told him that the "flock" had treated Tatiana and himself well, much to his surprise. Charlie was certain they left

the reserve at least in part because of the use of the "Alpha" as part of the Tournament and these dragons had expressed their displeasure just before leaving the Reserve. But why Charlie and Tatiana had been excepted from such expression was beyond him.

Cautiously, Harry stepped forward. He knew if these dragons meant harm, there was little he could do to stop them. The manor was by no means a dragon proof structure and he could not just leave. Most of his girls were inside as were all of the Longbottoms.

"Greetings, Warrior Prince," a voice said. Harry knew it was not one of the people with him. It was not even a human language. He could hear the distinct hiss and grumbles, yet he understood it perfectly.

"Greetings, Noble Dragon," he replied hoping whatever dragon who had said something could understand him, and that he was not going mental. The largest of the dragons turned to him and gazed at him in interest.

"You speak?" it seemed to ask.

"I guess I do," Harry replied.

"We had hoped there would be a Speaker, but such are usually not the Leader of your clans. It would seem that fortune has favored us both, Warrior Prince."

"I'm Sorry, Noble Dragon, but until this moment I was unaware I could speak to you."

"Do you speak with snakes?"

"I have."

"The languages are closely related. We can if we choose to. But to be honest, the snakes are very boring conversationalists. I am Hashal, Matriarch of my clan."

"Harry Potter."

"We have met before, Warrior Prince."

"We have? Wait! It was you that I had to ...?"

"It was indeed."

"I'm so sorry about all of that. It was not fair to you or the others to treat you as you were treated and you should not have been forced to..."

"I sensed your unease even then, Warrior Prince."

"Oh?"

"Most of your kind does not treat us with respect or as the equals we are. You, however, did not use magic in your task and challenged me on physical skill alone without magic and as an equal. That you succeeded in your task, as annoying as it was, speaks of your skill. That you used no trick or magic to do so speaks of your honor. To be bested as I was meant that you were deserving of honor, to include the honor of myself and my clan. Upon being returned to my lands, and once my young had fledged, I had you sought out."

"Oh?"

"Scouts were sent forth to find the Warrior Prince. We have our own legends and among them is that of a Warrior Prince who shall protect us from magic and those against whom we cannot protect ourselves and to bring us to a land where we can live free of the enclosures your kind would condemn upon us. It took us some time, for the world is a big place and your realm was hard to find, but find you we did and now we are here."

"And how can I protect you?"

"Figure of speech. Do you or your people hunt dragons?"

"No need," Harry replied. "Our native dragons are no threat to us nor us to them. My people enjoy watching them from a safe distance and no more. For what dragons can supply, we have a hybrid breed that

cannot fly which our breeders care for until they are old enough to be harvested."

"My scouts so reported," the dragon replied. "We seek a place where we need not fear your kind or for the safety of our young. Your kind across the water seeks us for harvest or sport, as you found out to your hazard. Your clans do not do so?"

"No. We let our native dragons be and they let us be. To use such noble creatures for sport ... I found that distasteful and I am certain my people would agree. If you pose no threat to my people and their animals, then we would have no cause to be a threat to you or your clan. To the east are our mountains around which the lands are unfarmed. There many magical creatures live and are not hunted or harmed by my people. Although, I can't say for certain whether your clan could live there and eat and not have a harmful effect."

"It is only our hatchlings that are voracious. Once fledged, we can live on a cow, sheep or deer a week. More than adequate exchange for what we may offer you, Warrior Prince."

"Oh?"

"We come here seeking refuge, not charity. We will, of course, ally ourselves to you in your times of such need. We are aware of the darkness growing in the islands to your north and know such darkness may well threaten your lands or that you may need to take action to protect your clans. We are a proud race and we honor those who honor us, hence the two we brought with us from the lands to the east. They had honor. The others did not and suffered for their crimes. We brought them here in good faith so you and your people would know we do not dislike your kind on sight. It is by your actions that many of your kind have invoked our ire. And it is by your actions Warrior Prince that you have thus far earned our respect and given us hope."

"You are offering us your help? In what way?"

"We can send scouts who can move unobserved. My kind can be unseen even if we are as close as you and I are. Scouts can observe

and report. And, should the time arise, we can be quite fearsome protecting our home and allies."

The conversation went on for some time as the others with Harry looked at him in confusion. Finally, the large dragon nodded. All but two of the dragons took off and flew to the east.

"Harry?" Hermione asked.

Harry turned to Cissy. "When you can, Cissy, contact the Lord Mayor. I want a large animal paddock built on the edge of the Reserve and I want it stocked with a couple hundred head of sheep and cattle."

Cissy nodded.

"Harry?"

"It seems we have some new friends and allies," Harry said indicating the two dragons that remained lounging on the Pitch. Harry then told the others about his interesting conversation.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9th, 1996 – Riddle Manor, U.K.

Voldemort sat at a desk reading over some documents. He was basically waiting. Pius Thicknese was due any moment to report on the Ministry. At precisely the prescribed time there was a knock on the door to the room he used as a study and he magically opened it revealing the visitor. It was not who he expected.

"Runcorn?" Voldemort asked.

"My Lord! Begging to report."

"I was expecting Thicknese."

Albert Runcorn nodded. "He is dead, My Lord."

"Dead? How?"

"According to the Ministry's official position, he was murdered. According to the one eye witness, he was executed."

"EXECUTED? SINCE WHEN IS THE DEATH PENALTY USED? WHY WAS I NOT INFORMED OF A TRIAL?"

"There was no trial and it was not the Ministry that performed the execution."

"AND WHO WAS IT?"

"Potter."

"What?"

"Potter killed Thicknese, and Thorfin Rowle and Umbridge in her office at the Ministry yesterday afternoon."

"Why? How?"

"According to the witness, he used a muggle device that blew their brains out."

"A gun?"

"I'm not familiar with such things, My Lord. As for why, Thicknese and Rowle were marked Death Eaters. He had their left arms bared for proof. The witness was not marked and was spared."

"Umbridge?"

"She organized an attack against Potter. It was a disaster both for the Ministry and for us. Potter killed her for the attempt."

"For us?"

"Twelve of our Operations types led by Yaxley were part of her strike force..."

"I NEVER AUTHORIZED A MISSION! WHAT WERE THEY DOING WORKING WITH UMBRIDGE?"

"I believe she paid for their services or at least she was going to. She agreed to pay them 50,000 upon completion of the task which was to kill or capture Potter. I'm told Yaxley agreed to provide a force in part because of our organization's recent financial troubles."

"Be that as it may," Voldemort growled, "WE ARE NOT A MERCENARY FORCE! We don't bow to or serve our enemies REGARDLESS OF THE PRICE AND THE MINISTRY IS THE ENEMY! I WANT EVERYONE RESPONSIBLE DEAD! WHERE IS YAXLEY?"

"Dead Sir. His body was portkeyed to the Ministry Atrium just after Potter killed our people in that office."

"Who was second in that force?"

"The whole force is dead, Sir."

"WHAT? TWELVE MORE?"

"Twenty-four more, My Lord. The twelve Umbridge sent were part of a force of eighty-six wands sent against Potter. Twenty four were Death Eaters. Twenty bodies, including our six people assigned to Azkaban, were in the Atrium. The other four were missing, but I've confirmed their deaths with Magical Archives."

"So you're telling me that two-thirds of my remaining hit force is dead?"

Runcorn nodded nervously.

"Who else do we have inside Azkaban ASIDE FROM PRISONERS?"

"That was all of them, My Lord."

"So we can't even bust them out? Granted, even with their help we're ill manned for an attempt or we were before this, but now we couldn't even do it with a hundred?"



"That is the situation."

"FUCK!"

Runcorn recoiled. He had never heard such language before. The Dark Lord was known for torturing Death Eaters using such Muggle language in his presence.

"I really need to hurt someone," Voldemort growled. "Relax, Runcorn. I can see your mind. You are not part of this problem and shooting the messenger is inappropriate. DAMN IT! Anything else? Any reports as to how much those fools actually accomplished?"

"They were dead before they ever got to wherever they were going, My Lord. It was a total waste."

"WE CAN'T AFFORD SUCH STUPIDITY! WE'VE LOST TOO MUCH AS IT IS! You will inform the FOOLS who still breath they are not even to go Muggle Hunting without my direct orders! They are not to even think of going after that Potter brat! So long as he stays out of Britain, I could care less that he exists! The coward ran from us, Runcorn! For now that is enough. We have bigger problems than looking for teenage runaways. We began this summer with almost seventy wands for combat operations. I now have nine, including three who are still recovering from another fiasco! We need to regroup, train new hit wizards, resupply. This summer has set us back years! ANYONE WHO THINKS I WILL APPRECIATE THE LUXURIES OF LATE IS GOING TO FEEL MY WRATH!! No murder or torture unless I order it. Gather money, supplies and recruits. We must rebuild before we can hope to achieve our goals. MAKE SURE THE INBRED IDIOTS KNOW THIS!"

"Yes My Lord!"

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Cathy Abrams was a twelve year old witch who had recently finished her first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. She was born on September 7th, 1983 making her the oldest student in

her year by a few weeks. Sorted into Hufflepuff house, she had entered Hogwarts eleven months ago and had grown more than four inches in height since starting school. Physically the black haired, blue eyed Cathy was the most mature girl in her year when she entered, which caused more than a little jealousy with the first year girls who shared her dorm. She had already developed noticeable if still somewhat small breasts during the summer before her First Year and was the only girl in her First Year dorm that did not still look like a little girl. By the time the year had ended, she had developed even further and now looked to be more like fifteen than almost thirteen. Her mother had told her that the women in her family tended to mature early. Still, that explanation did not help her make any friends in her year.

Her best friend was Eleanor Bromstone, who was a year ahead of her in school. Eleanor was not as developed as Cathy, but was not put off by the younger witch. She had, in a way, taken Cathy under her wing when she noticed how the other First Year Huff girls were treating her. Eleanor hated "girl politics" as she called it. This was the tendency of girls at their age to pick on girls who stood out one way or another. Those who blossomed early or later than "normal" - whatever that was - were subject to ridicule just as were girls who stood out in class, either as being smart or not so. In Eleanor's case, her classmates shunned her because she was smart and pretty, even though her younger friend was more developed. Cathy had it from two sides. She was popular with boys because she was more woman than girl and she was at the top of her classes.

Despite the social issues, and in no small part because of her friendship with Eleanor, Cathy actually enjoyed her First Year. She enjoyed most all of her classes, the one exception being Potions. While she found the subject fascinating, the professor was mean and vindictive to anyone who was not from his House. She had her first real crush on a boy four years older than her who, typically, did not even know she existed. Eleanor had a crush on him too, but he was in a different house and clearly preferred older witches if the rumors were true. It was a typical topic of meaningless conversation between the two budding adolescents. Everything was going so well, she thought, when she returned home for the summer. She was wrong. A

day or so after she returned for the summer, she realized her world had crashed down upon her.

A year earlier, Cathy had entered puberty as her first period announced that fact in June of 1995. When this event happened, she freaked as no one had told her the blood was normal. That night, as she suffered through the mess, cramps and general ill feeling, her mother gave her the first of three "talks." Her mother was a Pureblood witch from a Minor House who had married a Muggle Born wizard. The first "Talk" was about becoming a woman, sex, babies, boys and the like. Cathy had blushed for days following it. Her mother had spared no punches in telling her oldest daughter about what it meant to become a young woman and what sorts of activities she should avoid with boys for the time being and why. The first "Talk" had been both mortifying for the eleven year old and highly embarrassing at the same time.

Just before Cathy was set to head off to Hogwarts, her mother gave her the second "Talk." This one was not embarrassing, it was terrifying. Her mother told her about the status of witches in magical society, magical guardians, arranged marriages, Consort and Concubines. It was the notion of Concubines that terrified the eleven year old. The fact that her magical guardian could sell her into a form of slavery for any reason or no reason at all was horrible to contemplate. The fact that should that happen, she would lose her family and become little more than a whore on the bottom rung of magical society was even more terrifying. Cathy's only solace was the fact that her Daddy was her Magical Guardian. While her Daddy was a Muggle-Born, he aspired to make a name for himself in society, and the worst thing a social climber could do was sink to selling his daughters as sex slaves. Still, the fact that this could happen terrified the young woman.

Her third "Talk" came when she returned home for Christmas. Her first term had left her unnerved in a way. Practically from the first day, she had seen that most all of the upper year girls were having sex, as she understood it. Not so much with boys, although that clearly happened. She figured half of the Third Years and above had sex with other girls regularly - as in daily and in many cases more than once a day. The rest played with themselves quite publicly - at least

in places where boys were not allowed such as the girl's dorms and the girl's bathrooms. It disturbed her yet intrigued her as well. She asked Eleanor about it, but her friend had no idea why it went on and it apparently was not a Hufflepuff thing as the bathrooms between classes had girls from all houses getting sex either by themselves or with other girls.

Her mother told her about the importance of female orgasms to the growing witch and why all the older girls were doing what they were doing. Her mother told her that now that she was a true adolescent, she needed her orgasms as well and told her in explicit detail how to make that happen by herself, but also told her that there was no reason not to engage in sex with another girl. Unlike the Muggle World, at least among witches, same sex shagging was "normal" for teenage witches. It had nothing to do with lust, desire or romantic love and did not mean the young witch was not into boys. It was all about the orgasms necessary to help their magic grow and develop as they were overwhelmed by the hormones of becoming a woman. Her mother did not recommend self-pleasure or "girl sex," except to say that it was up to Cathy to decide which she was more comfortable with. That night, Cathy pleased herself for the first time. She enjoyed it. Still, there was something about sharing the experience that appealed to her even though she was not at all attracted to women.

The day after this talk, Cathy had left to spend a few days with Eleanor and her family. It had been agreed to beforehand and Eleanor would spend a few days at the Abrams' after Christmas. Not long after Cathy arrived, Eleanor told her that her mother had had the same talk about orgasms that Cathy had the night before. Arguably, one thing led to another. They were in Eleanor's room and they both pleased themselves while the other watched. This soon led to pleasuring each other and experimenting with kissing, caressing and every method that they had seen in the dorms of pleasing another girl. They both enjoyed it thoroughly although neither of them was suddenly interested in girls to the exclusion of boys as they feared. This was not lust, it was just about arousal and orgasms and they were now both okay with what should have been a disturbing concept.

Cathy's father was Muggle Born and had brought with him into the magical world the prejudices of his society. High on that list was homosexuality. He never said anything to anyone in his family, but deep down he would be humiliated if any child of his batted from the wrong side of the wicket. When Eleanor was spending a few days with them following Christmas, Cathy's father's worst fears seemed to be realized. He all but walked in on his daughter and her best friend naked as his daughter had her face in her friend's privates and was clearly having sex with another girl! Cathy's father hoped it was just a phase - youthful experimentation - and said nothing.

Cathy would never know that Easter Break was the end of life as she knew it. Her father, under a disillusionment charm, had watched in disgust as she and Eleanor have sex for an afternoon. What really did it for him was their pillow talk. While it was not the type engaged in by lovers, in his mind it was far worse. Having crossed the line into homosexuality - in his mind - they had returned to Hogwarts and had become lesbian sluts. They had had sex with seemingly half of the girls in their House and spent their afternoon alternating between having sex with each other and comparing notes on the older witches they had fucked. They even talked about girl orgies that happened every Sunday and how much fun those orgies were. Her father snuck out of the room as the two were again doing it and immediately sent a letter to the Auction House.

The day after she returned home for the summer, she knew something was up. Her two older brothers were looking at her with disgust. She thought about asking why, but could not think of a reason that would make sense. The Monday following her return, she woke up to an empty house. Everything in her room was gone save the bed she had been sleeping in and a change of clothes hanging from a hanger on the doorknob. The rest of the house was empty as well, except for four trunks in the living room. She opened each and saw they contained everything she owned. Her family was gone and she had no idea where they were.

On her school trunk was the letter that destroyed her. It was from her father. It told her he knew she was a "Lesbian" and he had disowned her out of the shame of her "abnormality." He wrote that her Mum had tried to convince him he was wrong about his "freak" daughter, but

there could be no denying she was an "abomination." She was disowned. He made it clear he could care less what she did with her "Freak" life or whether she lived or died and that the family had left and she was never to see them again.

After hours of crying, Cathy did the only thing she could think of, she went to her friend Eleanor's for the summer. Mrs. Bromstone was somewhat sympathetic, although she was enraged that Cathy's father could abandon her the way he did or that her mother would too. Still, as welcoming as the Bromstone's were, Cathy was terrified. She knew that what usually happened to a girl her age that was disowned and not married or bound to a wizard was that she would be sold as a Concubine. She was certain, deep down, that her once beloved Daddy had sold her off as a slave and whore. Each day that passed, she expected to be taken away to spread her legs either for some perverted old git or as little more than a prostitute. Each day that it did not happen was a blessing and as July had turned into August, she sensed a glimmer of hope. Should she remain unclaimed by September First, she would be spared for at least another year as it was illegal to claim a new Concubine who was in school while they were in school term. Should September First come along, she would be safe from enslavement until next June and maybe - just maybe - she could find a way to avoid it altogether. Still, each passing day she feared the Summons or the arrival of a Collector, a witch or wizard who would come and take her to a hell on earth.

August ninth had dawned and Cathy awoke. She had a bed in her best friend's room. While they pleased each other, they were not truly lovers as neither had an interest in sleeping in the same bed. With a boy, maybe, but not with a girl.

Cathy awoke once again to an empty room. All that was left was her bed and a change of clothes hanging on the doorknob. 'Not again,' she thought. She got up, showered and changed into the clothes, dreading what she would find as she left the room.

The house was much like her former home had been earlier that summer, devoid of furnishings. She descended the stairs and heard sobbing. It was Eleanor.

"No Daddy, no," Eleanor bawled. "Please take it back!"

"C-can't B-baby," Cathy heard Eleanor's father said. "Can't."

"Why - why not?"

"Cause I had to, Baby," he said. "I had to. D-Didn't want to. Damn Death Eaters gave me no choice. Pay or all die."

"W-Why?" Eleanor bawled. "Why would they do this?"

"They are evil, Dove," the man said in tears. "They torture anyway they can."

"P-p-please D-Daddy! Don't do this!"

"I - damn it Princess, I wish there was another way!"

"Will I ever see you and Mum again? And Amy and Christy?"

"I - I don't know," Mr. Bromstone said. "I hope so, but I don't know."

"And what about Cathy?"

"She's on the list too," he replied. "I'm sorry. Seems her Dad sold her off as well."

"No," Cathy whimpered softly as she fell and was overcome by her tears.

"No!" Eleanor wailed. "Why Daddy? Why?"

"No choice," the man bawled. "It was you or watch your Mum and sisters being raped and murdered. No real choice."

"D-d-d-daddy PLEASE!"

"I'm so sorry," Mr. Bromstone said. "If and when this war is over, Love, I will find you!"

"Daddy no! Don't leave me!"

"I'm so sorry, Eleanor."

"Daddy? NOOOOO!"

Cathy sat at the foot of the stairs in the empty house quietly sobbing. Her Daddy had sold her too. Still, she wondered if it was worse for her friend whose Daddy had told her that and told her he still loved her. She didn't know which was worse and really did not want to find out. It really didn't matter anyway. They were both screwed in more ways than one, and both victims of a male dominated society that reduced women like them to little more than commodities to be bought, sold and traded. It broke her heart and made her sick at the same time. But at twelve years old, what was there for her to do? All she could do was be there for her friend while their lives, hopes and dreams ended. She followed the sound of Eleanor's sobs and found her in an empty living room with just trunks and the broken girl. Tears streaming down her face, she pulled her friend into a hug and they wept for their lost lives together. Cathy never noticed the trunks that held everything she and Eleanor owned disappear. She also took a while to notice that the empty room she and Eleanor were in had disappeared as well and that they were now in an ornate room of sofas and tropical plants that was almost as large as any house she had ever been in.

Aside from Eleanor, there was only one other witch with them at present who looked even more confused than they did. The witch had been a Fifth Year Ravenclaw and was named Morag McDougal. Another witch arrived shortly, handed them some robes and escorted them to a parlor of some sort where to the relief of Cathy and the others Professor McGonagall was waiting along with a young girl who looked like she was too young for Hogwarts. The girl was named Gabrielle and they were told she was here to observe the morning lessons but would not take part in that afternoon's activities, whatever that meant.

Seeing Professor McGonagall there had momentarily given Cathy hope that she and Eleanor were not destined to become whores. That hope was dashed almost immediately. The first thing



McGonagall explained was that she was a Concubine and what that meant and that the three of them with the robes were to become Concubines that afternoon. True, the "lesson" did explain things in a way that did not sound anything like what Cathy had been told before, but there was just enough there to suggest to her it was spin. She was going to have sex with a man today whether she wanted to or not. The window dressing of accepting it and it could be wonderful did not change that fact. Well, Cathy was not going to accept it! When the lecture moved on to sexuality and the need for releases stating that in this instance they were encouraged to take advantage of their wizard for their needs whenever he was available, Cathy decided then and there she would do no such things. Whoever this wizard was might be able to order her to perform like some monkey, but it did not follow she had to like it, look forward to it, or rely upon it for her daily needs and she sure as hell was not going to seek out another whore for it either!

That afternoon she found herself in a huge library with a couple of other younger witches who, it was clear, were already whores and who like McGonagall were trying to convince her and Eleanor that this whole thing was wonderful. She could not tell what Eleanor was thinking. All Cathy knew was she was not going to think that way ever. She knew she could not resist the Bonding. She would do what she was told when she was told to. But she was not going to enjoy it and sure as she breathed was not going to love the bastard who would take her ever!

Then she found out she and Eleanor would not even be bound in private! All the other whores would be there to watch! She watched as they filed in. She recognized some, but did not know their names, aside from Professor McGonagall that was. They were all smiling and cheerful. Cathy hated them all on sight. Then he came in. Okay, she said to herself, Harry Potter. Boy-Who-Lived or not, the fact that he owned this place, the fact he was rich and the fact she had thought he was cute did not cover up the truth in her mind. The fact was he was naked and seated between her and Eleanor as McGonagall kneeled before him and took his thing in her mouth demonstrating one of the things she would be doing later. To Cathy's surprise, she was fascinated. She tried to be disgusted, but it wasn't working. She sat there and watched as the woman pleased the wizard and he sat

there with his arms around her and Eleanor. She sat and watched as McGonagall climbed into his lap minutes after he was done to put his thing in her and do him again. Each act seemed more interesting than the last. When they were done, and she felt it from both of them, Harry stood before them and recited the bonding oath.

Cathy watched as Eleanor was told to get up and undress and watched as Harry had his way with her best friend. Cathy was surprised by Eleanor's reactions. She had been with Eleanor enough to know the sounds the girl made when she was being pleased and the faces as well. Eleanor was clearly enjoying it! When told to take him in her mouth she did so with a big smile, as if she had been waiting all day for that! She pleased him with unbridled enthusiasm! And she clearly enjoyed doing it! When he finished, she had that smile on her face she used when she knew she had given Cathy a toe curling orgasm! He then did to Eleanor what Cathy had done to her friend many, many times and Cathy knew that he was very, very good at that judging by her friend's reaction. Finally, once Eleanor had caught her breath, Harry ordered the girl to lie down, her head inches away from where Cathy sat, and she sat and watched the boy take her friend's virtue. Worse still was the look in her friend's eyes just before he entered her. She was begging him to take her! Worse still, as much as Cathy was trying to hate this, she had never been so turned on in her life!

Soon it was Cathy's turn. She knew her body would obey at this point. She knew if he told her to strip, she would not be able to refuse openly. Her hope was that she would refuse inside. When he told her to stand, though, she was no longer refusing in her mind. She could not understand what had happened, but she was now beginning to want this badly. She wanted him to see her, touch her everywhere and make her come again and again as he had done to her friend. She had not believed McGonagall when the woman said something about Coven magic. This was not about him, she said. This was now about a collective them. A witch once invited is drawn to a Coven like a moth to the flame, she said.

She stood there, naked before all as he began to have his way with her and it was not just her body reacting to him, she was. His kisses and touch were beyond anything she had dreamed and she had her

first orgasm before he even began really touching her down there. He did not stop and she soon was brought to a powerful orgasm that buckled her knees. She did not know it yet or would not admit it, but her will to resist the bond ended almost from his first touch. Like the twenty-four witches before her, she was his before she took him in her mouth for the first time and now wanted him to make a woman out of her, to be her only wizard, to father their children. When he took her virginity, her eyes were begging for him and what he did to please her defied her ability to express in words. She never wanted him to stop.

Sometime later, after the Cross Bondings as Cathy rode her knew lover and came for yet another time and at another level beyond what she had even imagined possible, she began to understand and accept this new life. By the time she and Eleanor fell asleep hours later in their lover's arms, they were now his wives as well and deep down believed this was how it was meant to be for them.

A/N: There might be another Bonding Scene, but don't count on it. Harry, however, is done for a long, long time.

A review after one of the last chapters noted that it seemed this world is mysogenistic... I thought that was obvious by Chapter 10. This is a slave challenge/harem fic. Kind of hard to get there otherwise...

#### RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).
12. Eleanor May Bromstone, age 13 (12/5/82) (Hu-2); CONCUBINE POTTER 8/9/96.

HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Cathy Alicia Abrams, age 12 (9/7/83) (Hu-1); CONCUBINE BLACK 8/9/96.

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.

2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally (Broadmoor) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).
16. Bonnie Faith Carter, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).
16. Su Li, age 16 (Ra-5).
17. Morag Coleen McDougal, age 16 (12/5/79) (Ra-5); CONCUBINE NEVILLE 8/9/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.

3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine (Peters) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Alice Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura Carpenter, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).

6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SIXTY: FLYING THINGS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1996 – London City Airport, London, U.K.

Arthur Weasley arrived at London City Airport early in the morning having navigated his way there via the London Underground. While he had used that system before, it was only once and even then it was a short trip without the need to transfer. This time, it took longer and he had to transfer which had him worried, but it was actually easier than it looked and he soon found himself at his destination well before he needed to be there.

He dressed inconspicuously. As little as Arthur truly understood about Muggles (and he'd be the first to admit he didn't understand as much as he'd like) he did know how to dress like one which was so unlike most Purebloods. To the Muggles, Arthur looked like a professor or something similar in his tweed jacket, inexpensive and not quite matching slacks, collared shirt and boring tie. He had a small bag in which was a shrunken trunk that looked like a simple, wooden box in which were all his personal possessions including his magical ones. He had been warned not to carry his wand as he was subject to search at the airport and a wand might be hard to explain. It was in his shrunken trunk, although given the times not being armed made him nervous. Then again, he doubted the Ministry or the enemy was watching Muggle transport in general and certainly not the airports. While Arthur believed that Muggle Borns might well use planes on occasion, most Purebloods would have nothing to do with them at all. It was unnatural in their mind.

He passed through customs, as this was an international flight. He wondered if the Muggles would ask him about his destination and was pleased and also concerned they never even raised an eyebrow when they saw his boarding pass. Arthur had no idea that the pass was charmed and to the Muggles checking his papers and passport, it appeared that he was off to Amsterdam. He then found himself in a queue where they were checking bags and where he had to pass through some kind of portal. (Fortunately, his magical money was in his trunk). He had no idea what the strange devices did, but watched as people were pulled aside and searched and had to part with



penknives and the like. He thought of asking but decided that the uniformed security personnel did not look like they were in the mood to explain things. Given that none of the Muggles in the queue were complaining, he decided it was not important.

He got through rather easily and made his way to Gate 14, which was a large seating area near a door with huge windows that looked out at the airplanes and such beyond. Arthur might be 46, but he was like a lot of Muggle children at an airport for the first time. He was drawn to the window and stood there looking at the activity outside as planes moved about and took off or landed in the distance. It was fascinating, he thought, although he still had no idea how those large metal things stayed up in the air.

"Arthur?" a female voice asked.

Arthur was surprised anyone knew him and turned to the sound of the voice. He recognized her immediately. She was Poppy Pomfrey who had been the Matron in charge of the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts for over twenty-five years. Poppy had been in the same year as Arthur and Molly at school. She was in Hufflepuff House. Arthur had had a crush on her when she was younger that had suddenly ended when he started crushing on Molly their Fifth Year. He now suspected Molly had help as Molly had been rather dumpy even back then. Poppy had entered a two year internship after finishing Hogwarts to become a Matron and had been hired as the assistant School Matron when she finished her internship. She was in charge of caring for Fourth Years and below, the oldest of who had been First Years in her final year. Once the upper three years finished, she became the Head Matron and had been ever since.

Poppy's father was a Pureblood and her mother was either a Muggle or Muggle Born, Arthur could not remember which. That her father was a Pureblood explained a lot. As far as Arthur knew, Poppy had never married and in all probability was not a bound Concubine either. Arthur knew that Concubines were usually the daughters of Muggle fathers or fatherless witches. Pureblood girls only wound up that way under exceptional circumstances, such as what had happened to his Ginny. Still, there was no telling for certain. Arthur had recently learned that Minerva McGonagall had been a Concubine since before

he was born, yet she was on staff at Hogwarts before he even started and had taught him, his wife and all of his children.

"Poppy?" Arthur asked, "I'm surprised to see you."

Poppy nodded. "I'd like to say the same thing, Arthur. I heard about your wife. I'm sorry."

Arthur nodded. Pureblood divorces were so rare that even if they never made the papers, most would know about it anyway.

"I no longer know the woman," Arthur confessed. "The woman I married would never have done that."

Poppy nodded. While the divorce may not have made the papers, the events at the reading of Lord Black's Will had. What Molly had done could have precipitated a Line Feud which was grounds for divorce if it was not sanctioned by the Head of House. Tradition all but demanded what had transpired since.

"What brings you here?" Arthur asked.

"Probably something similar to you," Poppy replied. "I guess you could say I'm shot of this place."

"Can't say there's much left for me here either," Arthur said. "Four of my kids now live where we're going. Charlie's still in Romania."

"And the other two?"

"Ron seems to have been in on what Molly was planning. I've disowned him, not that it really matters. Percy has his job with the Ministry. I'm shot of them too. The articles in the Quibbler..."

Poppy nodded. "I knew it was bad. I had no idea it was that bad or that Dumbledore was ... well what he is. He sold off every Muggle Born witch who was old enough! How can I work for such a person? You know I'm not even allowed to talk about that sort of thing? I can't even discuss it with the girls who might know about it, much less with the ones who need to know. How can I look in their faces knowing

what I know? Anyway, I got a letter from Minerva offering me a position of some sort and I took it."

"Oh?"

"She says there's an opening for someone to teach magical first aid and casualty stabilization. She also implied that several of my former patients are wherever it is we are going. Girls there cannot be sold off, she said. As I have nothing else tying me down... So what will you be doing?"

"No idea, really," Arthur admitted. "I guess I'll figure that out when I get there. Right now being with what's left of my family is more important."

Arthur looked out the window at the planes.

"I wonder how those things stay up," Poppy said.

Arthur chuckled. "Always did myself. It's been a goal in my life to know how the Muggles do it."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry had an enjoyable lie in with his two newest and for all intents and purposes last girls. Still, as enjoyable as it was and as all of his nights seemed to be, it seemed they never truly made up for his days. This was supposed to be the summer hols and he was supposed to be a teenager and it seemed he was working almost all the time. Bondings aside, this past week had been the most demanding yet. In addition to the attack, they were already starting a limited evacuation for the families of the girls with the full evacuation set to begin in about two weeks. He had more construction projects going on than he could keep track of, the Military Advisory Group was being stood up, and now he had to deal with the international arena as well. Fortunately, most of that would be Remus's job and he thought the French would probably be a big help, but it was a lot to keep on top of. If only all he had to "keep on top of" were his girls. Life would be so much easier. (Not that that was easy! But it certainly was more fun!) Perhaps this was the reason most Dukes were in their sixties or older

when they took over. What Harry really needed was a holiday from his holiday.

It was at breakfast when it came to him. Why hadn't he thought of this before? Better yet, when was the last time he had done that? He could swear it might have been before the reading of Sirius's will, which meant he would have to explain an awful lot. Still... After learning about the Time Turners and particularly the risks associated with using them, Harry had looked this up in his Grandfather's journals. The magic was very different. You could experience days or even weeks inside, as he had a long while ago, while only a few hours passed outside. Moreover, your experience was fake in a way. Your body aged at the normal rate, which was why when he spent all that time learning about his family and legacy he never got hungry, thirsty or tired. Everything happened in his head. His body had only "aged" a few hours. If that was the case, then his Grandfather's special pensieve would not be risky at all to his girls regardless of their condition. He needed a break. It was too bad he couldn't use it for his "work" as he could only bring in people, not things and could not bring anything out. But for a break, it seemed perfect. So the question was who to bring with him for a little get away?

Mallory might be getting the bulk of her patients from the various Harems, but she still had regular ones as well and last night one of them went into labor so she was off at the hospital. Minerva was busy with schedules and lesson plans for the "Harem Girls" and Harry and Neville as lessons would begin in earnest in a couple of weeks. Dora, Fiona, "Big" Laura, Rhonda and Karen were all spending the day with their families somewhere else. The "shopping twins" were on another expedition to Pottersport to get their newest sisters set up with full wardrobes which also took Erin, "Little" Laura, Eleanor and Cathy out of the equation. Gabrielle was not going with them. She was to be out shopping as well and would be getting her wand, but she was going with Fleur and her mother. Ginny, Stacey and Tabatha were all going to be at the base getting some flight time in and in Ginny's case be there to meet her father who was due in not long after lunch time. Katie, Sally-Anne, Connie, Kathryn and the Patil Twins were all off to the beach. Harry had been invited, but had already begged off. While he did want to go, he so needed a break from everything. It was kind of funny, he thought. Here he was with twenty-six girls and almost all

of them had plans on Saturday. Only Luna, Hermione and Cissy were planning on staying at the Manor which, of course, decided who would be joining him.

After most of his family was off doing their things, Harry approached the three who remained. He told them he needed a break and how he intended to get it. Hermione and Luna knew what he was talking about, but Cissy did not. When he explained the device, she was intrigued to say the least. It took a little longer to convince his consorts as they both had to be concerned about the effects on their children, but he was able to convince them it was safe enough, far more so than even occasional use of the Time Turner. Hermione and Luna soon agreed it was a good day to see his parents and grandparents again. With that, they headed for the Library and the special Pensieve.

They materialized in an exact replica of one of the Sitting Rooms on the Ground Floor and, as every time before, it seemed empty.

"Where are they?" Cissy asked.

"It always takes a moment," Harry said.

Almost as soon as he had finished, the door opened. Harry had his back to it, but Cissy was looking straight at it.

"Siri?" she asked in shock.

Harry turned and saw what he had not expected at all. He expected his parents or grandparents or maybe all of them. But not this. Then again, it kind of made sense to him.

"Hello Padfoot," he said.

"Okay," the 'memory' of Sirius Black said, "now I am confused."

"Hey Mum and Dad," Harry added as his parents' 'memories' entered the room.

Sirius turned to James and Lily. "Um ... what's going on? I was just updating my memory base in this thing and..."

"Have a seat, Sirius," Lily Potter said.

"I mean," Sirius said as he sat, "I never see you guys during updates and ... certainly never Harry and what is Narcissa Malfoy doing her?"

"Sirius Orion Black," Cissy scolded. She was flabbergasted as well. Even after Harry explained to her about this Pensieve, she had not expected this. "YOU KNOW HOW I HATE THAT NAME!"

"She's as bad as Dora," Harry chuckled.

"Um ... sorry, Cissy," Sirius said. "It's just that I ... well it's been what? You were a Fifth Year last I saw you and that was 1979."

"Imagine my surprise, Siri," Cissy said. "Considering what I've been told of this place."

"Oh Bugger!" Sirius said. "I snuffed it, didn't I?"

"Great!" Harry said trying to lighten the mood. "First all those droll seriously Sirius puns and now we have to put up with Snuffles snuffing it as well?"

Hermione and Cissy actually chuckled, as did James and Lily.

"Once a Marauder, always one, Pup," Sirius replied with a laugh. "But seriously..."

"Here we go!"

"I'm dead, right? I mean the real me?"

Harry nodded.

"When? How?"

"When did you last update?" Harry asked as his grandparents came in.

"June 5th, 1996," Sirius replied. "Things seemed to be coming to a head and I had recently been told about the Twins – er – parting shots."

Harry nodded. "That was a classic. You should have been there! Flitwick said it was some of the best magic he'd ever seen. I think they might have finally topped you as all time Hogwarts prank masters, but... Okay, on June 14th, there was a battle at the Department of Mysteries. Voldemort tricked me into believing you were captured..."

"Please tell me you tried to find out otherwise before running head long into a mess."

"I did."

"The mirror?"

Harry hung his head. "I forgot about that. Floo called you at your place. Kreator said you were out and I believed the useless Elf." Harry was surprised Hermione said nothing in the Elf's defense. "Turned out you were upstairs tending to Buckbeak who Kreator had injured earlier. Fearing the worst, I headed off to London."

"After a little side adventure with a Toad Lady, Giant and some Centaurs," Hermione added.

"Six of us flew to London on some Thestrals," Harry continued, "entered the Department and were cornered by twelve Death Eaters. Hermione was with me as was Luna here. Neville Longbottom was there as well as Ginny and the other Weasley. We actually held our own for a while. Then you and some others came in. By that point, only Neville and I were still fighting. We were in the room with the Veil and you were dueling with Bellatrix. You got a little sloppy and she hit you with a stunner and ... and you fell through the Veil."

"In my defense," Sirius said looking at the other memories, "I had been out of practice and cooped up in that pit for months. At least I went down fighting with wand in hand. So how long ago was that? What day is today out there?"

"August 10th, 1996," Harry replied.

"You haven't been here in over a month?" Lily asked.

"Um..."

"Too busy to spend time with your parents? And let me guess, you haven't been spending time with your sister either."

"That's a little different!" Harry said.

"What's going on?" Sirius asked, although no one seemed to be paying attention.

"It's been real busy, Mum..."

"I'm sure it has what with all the girls in your life," Lily huffed.

"If only it were just that! Look, I came here 'cause I needed a break after a really rough week what with an invasion and all..."

"Invasion?" Charles Potter asked. "What are you talking about?"

"The British magicals attempted an invasion," Harry said.

"Seems there a bit miffed about the new Duke," Cissy added. "It did not go well for them."

"Not at all," Harry said.

"What the bloody hell is going on?" Sirius asked. This time the others remembered he was there. "My last memory is updating my memory in this thing. Now it's a couple of months later, not that I'm surprised but it looks like Harry finally woke up and smelled the pumpkin juice. Nice to see you, Hermione."



"Thanks," Hermione replied.

"But what's all this other stuff?"

"It's a long story," Harry said. "But as you have no better place to be and we are under a form of time compression and I really need time to sort a lot out."

"I think we should begin with a proper introduction," Cissy said to Harry before turning to the memories. "Ladies and gentlemen, may I present His Highness, Lord Sir Harry the First, Duke of Charenwell, Count of Darby, Head of the Ancient and Noble Houses of Potter and Black, Order of the Knights of the Round Table."

"That was a bloody mouthful," Sirius said. "I expected some of it, but what was the Count thing and this Knight...?"

Cissy waived him off. "May I also present Her Highness, Lady Dame Hermione Potter, Duchess of Charenwell, Order of the Knights of the Round Table and Her Grace, Lady Dame Luna Black, Countess of Darby, Order of the Knights of the Round Table?"

"The Count of Darby is the title usually reserved for the second son of the Duke," Cissy said. "As Harry became head of two of the oldest families when you both emancipated him and named him as your heir as Head of the House of Black, and as Luna was able to become Harry's second Consort and the Lady Black, Harry took the title for himself. From now on, the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black will bear that title and his Consort shall be the Countess of Darby. As for the knighthood, your friend Remus Lupin, Harry, Hermione, Luna, Dora, Neville Longbottom (who's Harry's age and now Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom) and the former Ginny Weasley were all knighted by the Crown for their fight against the Death Eaters. And, by the way, you were too as well as pardoned, but it was regrettably posthumously."

"Hear that?" Sirius laughed, "you can all call me Sir Sirius!"

"As you command, Sir Mutt," James Potter quipped.

"I will have you know I am a purebred," Sirius replied haughtily.

"Sir Poodle, then," James said.

"It is rather difficult to take you too seriously, Sirius," Lily chuckled.

"Did you have to pick a poodle?" Sirius moped. No one answered. "Fine then! I'd take my Quaffle and go home but as I am but a memory, I guess I'm stuck! So what else happened?"

Harry snorted. "You mean aside from the fact your best ever prank was after your death?"

"You really threw a kneazle among the garden gnomes, Siri," Cissy added. "As a direct or indirect result of your final actions in life and you Will and such ... well you know Harry is Duke of Charenwell. You probably guessed I accepted yours and Harry's offer to annul my marriage and Draco has been disowned. Dumbledore's and Molly Weasley's plots against Harry were exposed very publically. The battle you fought in and the ones that followed have all but wiped out the Death Eater combat arm. They are also now almost broke. With the votes of Houses Potter, Black, Longbottom and Bones sequestered here in Charenwell, there can be no quorum in the Wizengamot effectively paralyzing the Ministry. Fudge is basically a lame duck as Minister for Magic but can't be replaced because the Wizengamot can't be called into full session. About half the members of the Order of the Phoenix resigned and two of Dumbledore's primary members who remain are Harry's spies. Dumbledore was kicked off the I.C.W. and Magical Britain is now under close scrutiny, to say the least, for its list of transgressions and both Dumbledore and the Ministry have taken a huge hit in their money bags. Charenwell has allied itself with Her Majesty's government and Harry is now the primary magical contact and Councilor for both Her Majesty and the Muggle Prime Minister. We also concluded an alliance with magical France which will probably lead to the complete isolation of Magical Britain from Europe, if not the world. Harry all but destroyed the British Concubine trade. By this time next year, most if not all the Muggle Borns in Britain will be residents of Charenwell at least doubling this country's population which is important as

Charenwell has been asked to provide magical military support for Her Majesty's government in dealing with the crisis in Britain. The Charenwell Air Force is already forming and Army is recruiting. Thanks to the recent attempted invasion, over a thousand have signed up to date. Because of Harry's new family, he's doubling the size of the Manor and due to recent developments the Manor is now protected by a herd of Hippogriffs and a flock of Hungarian Horntail dragons. Am I forgetting anything, Harry?"

"Um ... maybe. For one thing, between what Dumbledore and the thirty-four dead beats have been forced to pay, I've made over a hundred million galleons and then there's the family stuff."

"S-such as?" Sirius asked.

"Um ... that I'm gonna be a Dad and will probably have at least twenty-two children within the year."

"TWENTY-TWO?" several of the memories exclaimed.

"Well," Harry blushed, "given that I have twenty-five wives, twenty-one of whom are or want to be pregnant and..."

"Twenty-five wives?" Sirius asked.

"And a betrothed as well," Harry added.

"How...?"

"I thought you were only talking about twenty!" Lily added.

"There've been developments," Harry said.

"Such as?"

"Such as after the reading of Sirius's Will, Dumbledore sold every bondable witch he could to come up with cash," Harry said. "Forty-two girls! There were fifty first time witches up for sale as of the day of the Auction and that was after Neville Longbottom and I had managed to take about six off the market including Hermione and my

sister. I bought all of them, plus one other. Then there were the witches that I got from the Black renters who owed a fortune in backed rents. That was another thirty-three. I have two Consorts. I inherited three Concubines, bought two directly from House Greengrass to prevent them from being sold to Death Eaters or their junior brigade. Of the fifty-one bought at auction, eleven are now either a Potter or a Black. I got five more from the confiscations. Ginny Weasley became mine when her mother's plot against my line was revealed to avoid a feud..."

"You only brought two with you," James said.

"Um ... actually I brought three," Harry said. "It's a Saturday and the others are busy having some personal time, visiting family and such."

"Three?" Sirius asked. "Wait. You married Cissy? You do know she's your Cousin!"

"So's Dora," Harry said. "You left her to me. And I'm like a second cousin to them."

"Actually," Luna said, "you're Cissy's second cousin once removed and Dora's third cousin. And I am your fourth cousin as is Ginny."

"Oh?"

"Yes. Your great-great grandfather was Cygnus Black, Harry, who is also Dora's great-great grandfather and Cissy's great grandfather. Sirius here – although I swear he looks just like Stubby Boardman of the Hobgoblins..."

"I've been told that," Sirius chuckled. "It's a pity I don't like that group."

Luna pressed on, "his great grandfather was also named Sirius and was Cygnus's older brother. They had another brother named Arcturus who had a daughter named Cedrella who married Septimius Weasley, who was Ginny's great grandfather. Finally, one of my great-great grandfather's on my mother's side was Phineas Black, who was Cygnus, Sirius and Arcturus Black's other brother. You do know many of us from old lines are related, even if distantly."

Harry nodded.

"Okay," Sirius said, "so how did Cissy become your wife?"

"And what happened to all those other girls?" Lily asked.

"The other girls are now part of one of six other families," Harry said. "My friend Neville – now Lord Longbottom – has a Consort and sixteen other wives and will get three more next week. His parents are..."

"Wait! I thought Frank and Alice were permanently messed up from the Cruciatus Curse," Sirius said.

"Apparently, it was another curse," Harry said. "Bella cast it in the end. We think it was an old Black family curse. Anyway, it's effects are only 'permanent' so long as the caster is alive. Neville killed Bella a little over a month ago."

"Good riddance," Sirius said. "You disowned her for good measure?"

Harry nodded. "Anyway, in addition to Alice, Frank has five new wives. Bill Weasley and Fleur have been joined by another thirteen wives and two concubines. Fred Weasley has a Consort, fourteen wives and a concubine. George Weasley has a Consort, twelve wives and three concubines and Remus has a Consort and five other wives so far. Although I should note, we expect the Concubines will become wives fairly soon."

"How?"

"That Love Bond," Harry said. "That makes them a wife in all but name. Love Bonded Concubines become wives when the family either becomes a coven or they become pregnant."

"Actually, it's when they give birth," Hermione said. "Not that it matters with us anymore."

"Okay and what does that mean?" Lily asked.

"As I said before, a lot of my wives either are pregnant or will be," Harry said.

"Who?"

"Hermione's expecting twins," Harry said. "A boy and a girl."

"Congratulations!" several voices said.

"Have you picked any names?"

"The boy will be Robert James and the girl Lily Rose after their grandparents," Hermione said smiling.

"Thank you," Lily said chocking up a little.

"Luna is expecting as well, although we don't yet know what she's having," Harry said.

"Well, not officially," Luna said. "I do believe I'm like Hermione. One of each. I'd like to name our son James Sirius after your Dad and Godfather and our daughter Hermione Jenna after Hermione and my Mum."

"Sounds great," Harry said. "Mallory's having a boy," he continued, "who we're naming Sirius James as he will be the first Black. Dora's having a girl we're naming Andrea Justine so she can be called Andy like her gran. Minnie's having a girl we're naming Anna Rose..."

"Whose Minnie?" Sirius asked as James started laughing. "What's so funny?"

"You knew her as Professor McGonagall," James said. "It seems gramps had her as his love bonded concubine and then Dad inherited her and finally Harry."

"You shouldn't prank the dead," Sirius began.

"No prank," Harry chuckled. "She's now my wife as well."

"Isn't she a bit old?"

"Apparently not," Harry said. "And Daphne's pregnant as well."

"Daphne?"

"She's one of David and Vivian Greengrass's daughters," Harry said. "The Death Eaters forced them to sell her and her younger sister Astoria to the next Lord Black thinking it was Draco. I bought them. Daphne's now a Black and Astoria's a Potter."

"Bloody hell! Any other surprises?"

"Only that Ginny Weasley, Stacey Campbell, Katie Bell, Padma Patil, and Rhonda Lester are trying to get pregnant. They're all Potters now. And Karen Green, Parvati Patil, Connie Plumber and Cissy are also trying to expand House Black. Let's see... Laura Oliver, Sally-Anne Perks and Erin Sullivan will probably try to add to House Potter beginning in a few months and Tabatha Collins, Fiona Simpson and Kate O'Fallon will probably try and add to House Black as well. Oh, and Astoria Greengrass wants to try beginning next summer."

"I don't envy you son," James said.

"Wait a tick," Sirius said, "how'd Cissy become one of your wives? You had no grounds to take her as a Concubine but she is one, right?"

Harry shook his head. "She's is not and never has been a concubine."

"Then how ...?"

"She asked."

"But you can't have more than one Consort per line!"

"When she asked," Hermione said, "we had already become a coven." Hermione then spent several minutes explaining what they

had learned about that, including how the magic could accept new members and wives simply if all agreed.

"And this betrothal you spoke of?" Lily asked.

"It was the best way to describe that one," Harry said. "Her name is Gabrielle Delacour; younger sister of Fleur – who's Bill Weasley's Consort and was the French Tri-wizard Champion. The two of them are daughters of the French Minister for Magic who is also now the Deputy Head of the I.C.W. Gabrielle is not quite ten, so the complete bond can't happen."

"Complete bond?"

"She's part Veela. She chose me as her life mate about eighteen months ago after I saved her life, although I only found that out this past week. So she is already bonded to me for life even though it may be some years before I can bond with her."

"You sure don't do anything normal, do you pup?" Sirius said.

"Guess not." The group then spent several hours talking about everything else that had happened over the past couple of months.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1996 – Jake's Pub, County Leitrim, Ireland.

Magical Ireland was a mystery to many and a problem to some. The same could be said about Charenwell, but both the nature of the mystery and problem were quite different. Few in the magical world really knew about Charenwell, whereas most knew or at least had heard of Magical Ireland. However, few outside of magical Ireland saw it as anything other than a part of Magical Britain. The Magical Irish saw things differently.

When the Wizengamot of the British Isles was first formed, 182 of the 600 seats were held by Irish clans or families. As had been the case in the rest of Britain, the lines died out or gave up their seats one by one, with other lines gaining the additional seats. For centuries, the Irish kept their seats to themselves, but around the time that



Charenwell gained its independence from England (the event being unrelated) the Wizengamot had become dominated by English "Purebloods" who forced through a law that required vacant seats be passed to their families only. Over the next few centuries, the Irish and Welsh seats disappeared altogether. It was only through cunning that a handful of Scots kept some of their former votes.

The last Irish magical on the Wizengamot died without an heir to his seat in 1498, effectively taking Ireland out of the government that ruled over them. Needless to say, the Magical Irish were not pleased with this development, but were also unable or unwilling to force the issue. As far as the ruling elites in England were concerned, Ireland was a backwater of little interest aside from taxes and trade, and even then they only cared that the taxes were paid and trade continued. As far as the Magical Irish were concerned, their disenfranchisement was proof that the Magical English were no better than their non-magical counterparts and just as foreign.

When the Romans began their conquest of what would later become England in the First Century, Ireland and the British Isles were peopled by Celtic tribes or kingdoms. The Celts had been one of the largest singular cultures in Europe both in terms of the land they occupied and their population. At their largest, Celtic peoples occupied all of the British Isles and almost all of Europe south and west of the Rhine River to include France, Western Spain Portugal and even Northern Italy and the valley of the Danube all the way to the Black Sea. While they shared a common culture and technologically were not the barbarians the Romans painted them as, unlike the Romans they did not share a common government or purpose. Their divisions amongst themselves made them easier for the more organized and cohesive Romans to conquer, although when they did unite their tribes, they gave the Romans fits. Vercingetorix united the tribes in what was now France to stand against Julius Caesar and nearly ended the man's career before it began, but failed in the end. About a century later, Queen Boudicca in Britain almost ended the Roman occupation before a competent army under Suetonius ended her rebellion.

By the end of the First Century, Celtic independence was largely limited to Ireland. True, what was now Wales was not under direct

Roman rule, but it was a vassal state. At Rome's height, what was now England was a Roman and Romanized colony. Modern day Scotland was the land of the Picts, a Gaelic people who, centuries later, merged with immigrants from Ireland to become the Scots. (Histories varies as to whether this was a merger of two related cultures, or a brutal conquest by the Irish tribes.) Following the fall of the Roman Empire, Roman Britain fell to successive waves of invaders who replaced the Romanized Briton culture with their own. The Anglo-Saxons (whose language later became English) crossed the North Sea and conquered England. The Anglo-Saxons a culture that was related to the forerunners of the Vikings. Mercia would later fall to the real Vikings and all of England would, for about fifty years, be ruled by a Danish (Viking) dynasty before the Anglo-Saxons were again restored. That Kingdom would later fall to the Normans from the north of France, a Duchy named after the North Men or Vikings who had conquered it over a hundred years earlier. Basically, England was a nation peopled by Vikings. Ireland, Scotland and Wales remained Gaelic, speaking their ancient language. (Gaelic refers to the specific branch of Celtic languages spoken in the British Isles).

The rise of Norman England marked a significant separation between the histories of the magical and non-magical peoples. The Irish magicals were part of a common magical realm that included all of the British Isles whereas the non-magicals remained part of various Irish kingdoms that were in an almost constant state of war with each other and later with the non-magical English. While in time, non-magical Ireland would fall to the English under force of arms and become a subjugated people, the Magical Irish lost their status in the political realm and not on the battlefield. Moreover, the non-magical Clearances in Scotland in the seventeenth Century which forced tens of thousands of Scots into Northern Ireland and created a hostile relationship between the Irish and their new neighbors that continued down through the centuries did not have a counterpart in the magical world. Yes, there were magicals from England and Scotland who moved to Ireland. But they became very Irish very quickly and were, at the time, just as appalled at the disenfranchisement as any, even if they became "Irish" centuries later.

The Magical English looked down on their Gaelic neighbors just as much as their non-magical counterparts did. The difference between the two was how. The non-magicals suppressed their Gaelic neighbors and in the case of Ireland rendered most of the people as little more than serfs. The magical English simply ignored the Irish altogether. In time, this created a semi-independent state, although only the Irish truly knew this to be a fact. Not long after the disenfranchisement, the Irish Magicals set up a government in secret. Appalled by the inequitable laws imposed from London that favored such foolish notions as Blood Status and English Supremacy in many areas such as taxation, education, and positions within the "legitimate" government, the Irish set up a system to get around those laws at least in Ireland. The English Magicals really did not care too much about what happened across the Irish Sea so long as the taxes continued to be paid. After all, no self-respecting English Pureblood was about to look to Ireland for a betrothal regardless of the fact that many Irish families, while not Pureblood by English standards, could trace their magical heritages back much further than many of the English.

Unlike non-magical Ireland, its magical counterpart was never divided north and south. The non-magical English manipulations with their non-magical neighbors across the sea began with their taking advantage of a divided society and more by accident than design kept it divided. When Home Rule finally came about, the five northern counties wherein the Scots refugees from the English Clearances and later oppressions had settled opted to stay with Britain whereas the less affected and far more Irish south became the Republic of Ireland. Magical Ireland, on the other hand, became unified in terms of its view of self governance around the time the Wizengamot was formed. When they were eventually disenfranchised by the English Purebloods, they simply set up their own secret government mainly to ensure the English stayed on their side of the Irish Sea. It helped that Ireland was not easy to get to magically. Only in the north, in Counties Antrim and Down which lay across the North Channel from Scotland was apparition truly possible for most magicals. For reasons rarely explained, apparition across large bodies of water reduced the range and few magicals would apparate to a land they could not see even if they could manage the distance. For most, forty to fifty miles was the best they could manage over water and only in the North was

the distance less. Thus, apparition between Ireland and Britain was not convenient. Magical travel was mainly by floo (as the two were part of the same network) or portkey (which were regulated by the Ministry). Consequently, so long as there was no reason, the English Ministry seldom bothered the Irish.

Irish semi-autonomy began early, long before the Pureblood English became a thorn in their side. Less than fifty years after Hogwarts opened, the Irish opened their own school. While Hogwarts was the oldest school in the British Isles, St. Patrick's was the largest. All of its students were born and lived in Ireland or were of proven Irish descent and the vast majority of Irish magicals were educated there. Whether by accident or design, this gave the Irish magicals an early sense of self.

In 1540, the Irish magicals set up their secret government. They had no communications with the Crown or even the local non-magical government nor did they send forth ambassadors or accept embassies, but they soon had their own Gringotts branch in Dublin which meant that while the wizards of the world might not see Ireland as a separate country, the Goblins did. For lack of a better word, magical Ireland was governed by its National Assembly. From the beginning, it was an elected body as the Irish had no intention of falling into the trap of a hereditary government and its ability to monopolize power. Each Assemblyman stood for election every three years with a third up for election in any given year and each represented a specific geographic district which was defined along the same boundaries as the non-magical counties. There were originally 32 Assemblymen, one from each County. Eventually, however, they saw the need to make representation somewhat reflective of the population as well. It did not seem right that County Longford, which in 1996 had a population of 313 and was the smallest magical county in population, should have the same voice as Dublin with over 7,000 magicals. Most counties had one Assemblyman. Counties Antrim, Cork, Down, Galway, Limerick, and Waterford had two while Dublin had 15 for a total of fifty-two. The Assembly acted as legislature, Justices of the Peace as well as law enforcement, although in the latter capacity there were County Constabularies and similar officers who were civil servants and not elected officials. Moreover, while the magical population of Ireland

was around 25,000, they considered their community to number closer to 40,000 as unlike their counterparts across the Irish Sea; they considered Squibs and Muggles with magical family members as part of their community. This notion extended to their secret government. Of the fifty-two Assemblymen, two were Squibs and five were Muggles.

The Assembly had no permanent meeting place. In the beginning, it met at a different location almost every day in session to keep the English from noticing. When it was clear the English would not notice they kept up the practice out of tradition. In most years, the Assembly met for maybe three weeks out of the year, but with the Troubles across the way and the recent revelations regarding English predations (in the form of their proven ability to sell off Irish Muggle Born witches), they had been in almost continuous session.

The fifty-two were now seated in a rural pub in County Leitrim. The publican was a magical and the brother of the host of this meeting. Assemblyman Padrig O'Donnell represented County Leitrim and as such hosted the Assembly when they met here, which was not often. Padrig was in his twenty-fourth term on the Assembly making him the longest serving Assemblyman in the history of that organization. One might think it would be easy for him to stay in his office given he was from the second smallest district on the assembly. But County Longford, the smallest, seemed to change its mind about who should speak for it every six years and no one else had served more than ten terms. Padrig had said it was harder to stay in office than to get there and in his seventy years on the Assembly, he had never missed a baptism, wedding or funeral of any of his constituents and was known for digging into his own vaults to help someone from his county who was down on their luck. Padrig was highly respected throughout Ireland and never spoke at meetings unless he had a considered and well thought out opinion on a matter which by now meant that when he did express his opinion, the others listened.

The Irish Assembly was incensed, for lack of a better word, at the English stupidity. Fudge had suppressed information of the return of Voldemort and his Death Eaters. While this concerned all, it was of particular concern to the seven Assemblymen from the five counties in Ulster. During the last war, Death Eaters brought some of their

initiates to Ulster to prey on the Muggles and there was no doubt in their magical neighbors' minds that the Death Eaters might well have precipitated the Troubles in Northern Ireland and certainly inflamed an already volatile situation, a fact the then Ministers for Magic and Wizengamot refused to acknowledge. Now, as the Muggle government and IRA were trying to arrange a cease fire, to learn that Death Eaters might be active again and again the London magicals would do nothing was infuriating.

Most recently came the revelations that the Head of the Wizengamot was selling Irish Muggle Born witches off as concubines and had been for who knew how long. Their constituents asked what gave an English wizard rights over Irish magicals. While there were some who were not totally opposed to the trade, all were of the opinion that no foreigner should have the right to use Irish witches to supply their flesh trade.

Finally, just that morning the papers had exposed the Ministry's failed attack on a country named Charenwell. Few had even heard rumors of that country before, but the fact that the English would be so foolish and would seemingly be willing to engage the services of Death Eaters against a foreign country made many wonder whether they might consider the same for Ireland. For over two centuries, members had debated the merits of a final break with the rest of Magical Britain yet for many reasons they had not done more than discuss it in the philosophical context and certainly not in open Assembly.

Padrig O'Donnell rose from his seat and the eyes of the rest of the Assembly were upon him. "Assemblymen," he said, "for weeks now we have cataloged and debated the recent actions and inactions of those who claim to govern us. For decades if not centuries, we have known their claim of sovereignty was more in their own minds and it was and is only our economic connections with them and their people that have kept us playing our own game. But at no point have we ever ceased being Irish!

"The reckless actions of a deluded few should not be paid for on these shores or by those who live here. It is time, I believe, that we give serious thought to a final and permanent break. From this day

forward, we will decide our destiny! From this day forward, Ireland first! From this day forward Erie go bragh!"

It was a short speech followed by a unanimous cheer and it began the road to a new Magical Ireland. But a true break was a long ways away. It would be easy enough to do. They could take control of the Floo and block unrestricted travel across the Irish Sea. They had curse breakers who could set up wards to prevent most unrestricted portkey and apparition. They could quite easily divert taxes from London to ... well wherever they decided their Treasury would be situated (most likely Dublin as that was where their Gringotts branch was located.) They could do that in weeks or less, and more than a fair few of them had thought about just that at one time or another. But these were not the foreign fools and usurpers in London. They knew they needed additional preparation. They needed to establish contact with the two Muggle governments in the Emerald Isle, knowing full well the Republic of Ireland had no contacts with the magical world. They also needed contacts with the I.C.W., particularly now that the English were no longer in control. They needed trading partners other than Britain. They needed allies.

By that evening, two Assemblymen were making arrangements to travel to North America to visit family. Just as there was a sizable Irish community in non-magical North America, there was a large magical community as well. Non-magical events such as the Potato Famine of the 1840's did not spare the magicals. Millions had emigrated when their primary food crop died in the fields and the British landlords continued to send the cash crops and livestock to England. The truth of that time was not that the potato crop failed and the Irish starved. Potatoes were but a fraction of the crop yield and the only crop that failed. Throughout the famine, Irish farms produced more than enough food to feed themselves, but the English owned those crops and there was no money in feeding the hungry. The effect on the magical community was skyrocketing food prices, which drove thousands across the sea.

But the Irish Americans did not disappear from Ireland entirely. In the Muggle world, they contributed directly and indirectly to Irish Home Rule funding Irish patriots and pressuring their own government to lean on the British. Later, after the Republic of Ireland was founded,

many continued to support the ongoing struggles in Ulster, for better or worse. It was probable that the troubles might not have lasted but for such support. What the magicals hoped for was a similar response from their North American magical cousins should they too seek a final break from England. Finally, there was a source closer to home it seemed. Assemblyman Patrick Sullivan, a Muggle from one of the Dublin districts, had two sons and a daughter who were magical. His brother Thomas also had magical children and a daughter who had recently fallen prey to Dumbledore's slave trade, yet had wound up in very unique circumstances. Thomas had received a letter from her inviting him and the family to at least visit. It would seem that his daughter was now the wife of the Duke of Charenwell.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

Arthur found himself seated in a window seat near the front of the aircraft which he was told by the young woman acting as a "Flight Attendant" – whatever that was – was known as a Bombardier Dash Eight. Poppy was somewhere else on the plane and one of the other men who showed up was seated next to Arthur. Arthur noticed that, unless he was mistaken, the rest of the people looked very Muggle and not unlike photos he had seen of Muggle military types. He was right and he was wrong he quickly learned. Yes, aside from Poppy and himself, all the others on the plane were part of the British Muggle Military. But at least some were magical and they all knew about magic. They were all being assigned to something called the Charenwell Military Advisory Group, which sounded somewhat ominous, although it was not nearly as disturbing as learning that despite the Ministry of Magic and the Statute of Secrecy, at least some Muggles knew all about the magical world.

Still, it did not matter anymore to Arthur. And the gentleman beside him was a flyer in the Royal Air Force whom Arthur hoped could tell him how airplanes stayed up. In the end, it made no sense to Arthur. The flyer told him about air flow, pressure differentials and something called lift and Arthur still had difficulty grasping it. It did not matter to Arthur that statistically one was more likely to be struck by lightning than die in a plane crash. He refused to believe that an airplane staying up was mostly all about going forward fast enough.



Ginny Weasley was both a little bored and nervous at the same time as she sat in the Ready Room for her new training squadron. She had completed her course in the Tiger Moths last week and was now transitioning into what she thought were the really cool Spitfires. She knew visual navigation and formation flying from her Tiger Moth training and was learning the differences between that slow plane and her new, comparatively fast fighter plane. She had just completed her tenth hour and knew she could take off, land, and recover from spins and stalls just as well as she did in the biplane. Today, she now waited for a scramble order with three other pilots. One was Squadron Leader Davis, one of the older pilots who had been flying these planes for some years. The other three were like her, fresh out of basic flight training. Dora was with her as were Daphne and Astoria. Their mission was to take off when ordered, fly out to the northeast and meet one of Charenwell's new passenger planes and "escort" it back to base. Seemed simple enough to Ginny, except she knew one of the passengers was her father. She was not nervous about the flying. It was what would happen when she was back on the ground.

What was she going to tell him?

The truth, she thought. But how much? She certainly would tell him she was very happy with her strange new life and had done more and experienced more in the past month than she thought possible. She would tell him she thought that as painful as being sent away was at that moment, since joining Harry's family she felt it was truly the best thing that ever happened to her. But what about more personal questions?

Harry had never hurt her, or at least not since binding her to him. She was now part of a large family and coven and they were all there for each other. This was true in all respects. She might even tell him she hoped she would be pregnant soon, then again maybe not. The last thing she wanted to discuss with her father was her sex life as wonderful as she thought it was.

She knew if she even hinted at her life in that regard to her former mother she would think her daughter was a tart. Since joining Harry,

she had never had sex outside of her family, but she had sex with someone in House Potter or Black at least three times a day. She and her sisters in the coven preferred Harry sex, but so far girl sex was a fair substitute if he could not be in her somewhere. She didn't care where Harry took her in any definition of that word. She loved having him inside of her and while she preferred the version which would lead to babies one day, she enjoyed sucking him off and even letting him take her in the bum. It was all enjoyable. At school, she had not been into girls all that much. She had not had girl sex until she was told it was part of being on Angelina's Quidditch Team and even then, unlike most such girls, she only shagged her three girl teammates either in the showers following practice or in the "game planning" "discussions" in Angelina and Alicia's Seventh Year dorm room. Here? As long as the girl was bonded to Harry and Harry to her (ruling out Gabrielle for now), Ginny wanted her as well. She only had the three most recent additions to go to complete her set, and then work through them all again and again... Definitely not something she was going to tell her father...

The Dash Eight had taken off from London over two hours ago and was now high over the Atlantic Ocean. Arthur had reached a couple of conclusions. First, this airplane was way faster than any broom he had ever been on. The plane seemed to speed down the wide "plane road" faster than he could have imagined before it smoothly and quickly lifted into the air. Second, these Muggles flew far higher than any wizard. He was told how high they would be flying and could not believe it! No wizard had flown that high on a broom! (Many claimed to have, but all had reputations of gross exaggeration.) Everyone knew you could not fly that high and breath! He had no idea what the man next to him meant by "pressurization."

Still, it was exciting. It was his second life's dream coming to fruition. Whether he understood how these things stayed up or not, he always wanted a ride in one and it was amazing. He stared out the window and saw two smaller planes were along side, yet at a distance keeping pace. He pointed it out to the Air Force man next to him who seemed surprised to see "Spitfires" "this far out" and "at all, really." The man explained they were old war planes from the last great Muggle War. He then talked for several minutes about the planes he had flown himself, diverting Arthur's attention from the window. When

next Arthur looked out, the plane was near or over land – it was hard to tell as he could see the coastline of to the side – and it was much lower and getting lower by the second.

For a moment Arthur was worried something was wrong. They were really getting low to the ground and there was nothing but moor beneath them and he wondered whether the airplane really needed one of those "airplane roads" to land. Suddenly, they were over just such a road. He saw that the two little planes were gone just as he felt the plane shudder as its wheels touched the ground. Arthur smiled. He had flown in a plane! And, more important, he had lived to tell his family about it; to the extent they would still see him. It took several minutes as the plane seemed to drive around on the ground as if it was looking for something, then he heard the engines shut down and watched with a smile as the spinning thing slowly came to a stop. As soon as the plane was quite, the "Flight Attendant" opened the door at the front and let down the stairs that seemed to magically extend. Arthur and the others now stood and gathered their belongings, although Arthur could swear he heard more airplane engines outside.

He stepped out of the plane just in time to see one of those little planes several yards away following a short person with waiving arms, turning almost in a circle. As soon as the short person seemed happy, he gave the plane a single and Arthur heard that plane's engine shut down and watched as the spinning thing at the very front stopped. As soon as that happened, the clear bubble on top slid back and a small section of the side flipped down. He could see the pilot awkwardly standing up where the bubble had been and stepping out onto the wing of the plane, jumping to the ground. The pilot had a leather jacket on as well as a leather thing with odd looking glasses on the pilots head. The pilot took off the head piece and shook out long, red hair. Arthur was stunned to see the pilot was a woman. She looked up and saw Arthur and smiled, breaking into a run.

"Daddy!" she cried out.

Seeing his daughter running towards him not minutes after he arrived in this new land would have been surprise enough. Seeing that she

was one of the people flying those little planes? Maybe now someone could explain to him how they stayed up. But that could wait.

Ginny crushed him with a hug. "I've missed you, Daddy," she said. "And guess what?" When Arthur didn't respond, Ginny answered for him: "Charlie is here too! He got here yesterday!"

Arthur was not expecting that.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).

11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).
12. Eleanor May (Bromstone) Potter-Black, age 13 (Hu-2).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Cathy Alicia (Abrams) Black-Potter, age 12 (Hu-1).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

#### Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally (Broadmoor) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).
16. Bonnie Faith Carter, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).
16. Su Li, age 16 (Ra-5).
17. Morag Coleen (McDougal) Longbottom, age 16 (Ra-5).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine (Peters) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.

2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P
4. Alice Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura Carpenter, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE: ABOUT AIRPLANES

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1996 – RAF Pottersport, Charenwell.

Arthur Weasley's introduction to Charenwell was an eye opener to say the least. Raised a British Pureblood, although not from a family that thought such things were a distinction of note, he was well accustomed to the practices and culture of magical Britain. As a Ministry Official in Law Enforcement, he was also well versed in the law in general and the law in particular within his area of expertise which was the Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office. In his primary job, he was tasked with dealing with Muggle things that had been magically altered. By law, such things were highly regulated when used within the magical community and illegal should they cross over to the Muggle either by accident or design. For all intents and purposes, Arthur had to deal with what he considered the worst magicals: those who indirectly caused harm to Muggles for no reason other than they could. If he were a Muggle, his job would be most analogous to one who dealt with computer hackers and such who crippled innocent users simply because they could and, in the worst cases, because they could profit from it. For Arthur, as fascinating as the Muggle World was, there was a line. A magical was a magical and a Muggle was a Muggle. Crossover between the two worlds was dangerous as it risked exposure of the Magical World and violation of the Statute of Secrecy. He knew his job and the very existence of the Ministry itself was primarily to prevent Muggles from learning that magic existed and that there were people who could do magic. He had thought and hoped he and others in similar jobs had been successful. He had never really considered that there might be another way.

When he had managed to get word to Bill about possibly leaving England and learned that Bill and Fleur had moved to Charenwell, Arthur knew only a few things about the place. First and foremost, he knew it was a magical country that had been thought as a myth or children's tale. Apparently it was quite real, if also quite well hidden. Second, he knew that Harry Potter was somehow connected with that country. Maybe others missed it (certainly his ex-wife did, either that or they chose to ignore it) but Arthur specifically recalled Harry being introduced as the Duke of Charenwell at the reading of Sirius Black's



Will. Finally, if Harry was at this Charenwell place, then Ginny was too. Arthur knew he might never see his daughter again – he had ceded her to Harry willingly and was not so out of touch to know what fates might be in store for his only daughter – but he had also hoped that Harry was cut from a different cloth than most of the flesh peddling types and maybe he would treat Ginny well and just maybe allow Ginny to see her father again. Fortunately, his communication with Bill recently had told him his hopes had been realized. Bill saw her at least once a week and spoke with her frequently enough. While Ginny was not pleased with why things had happened and probably would never forgive her mother for it, she was happy with her new life or at least that was what Bill had told him.

Bill had also told Arthur that one could not apparate to and from there, but that told Arthur very little. Most witches and wizards could not apparate at all or chose not to except in dire need. Of those who did routinely (such as himself) apparition over large bodies of water was at best problematic. Some said water affected range. Arthur never tried to find out and was just as convinced that blind apparition over water was just too dangerous. It was dodgy enough when one tried it over land. To hope you could pass over the sea and land somewhere solid without actually having been there before was probably asking too much. Most people never tried crossing water and the one place where it was done on anything approaching regularity was up north between Scotland and Ireland.

The fact that he could not Portkey there was also not surprising. International Portkeys were highly regulated by both of the countries in question. Portkeys had near global range and could land a user within feet of a destination. Past usage had proven it was a useful tool for thieves, assassins and invading magical forces, consequently there were all sorts of treaties restricting their use across frontiers. It was not generally known in Britain – then again British Magicals were not the international travelers their Non-Magical countrymen were – but there were countries out there that had banned all international portkey use except on invitation or official business; the Confederation of North America being a prime example having banned such use when they decided to break with Europe altogether not long after their non-magical neighbors had succeeded in doing the same thing.

But Bill had also mentioned something about Charenwell having and International Floo connection that had been shut down. Despite what many might think and as small as his office was, Arthur's job crossed borders. His office was also tasked with tracking down and retrieving British made enchanted Muggle artifacts that had left the country. Mostly this meant coordinating with other magical governments. On occasion someone from his office had to actually travel overseas. This job usually fell to Perkins as he was older and had far more vacation time saved up so he usually took his wife on holiday when one of the foreign excursions presented itself, particularly if it was somewhere remotely interesting to a magical tourist. Having an international floo connection meant two things to Arthur. First, Charenwell had a Gringotts branch and was therefore recognized as a legitimate magical realm by the Goblins. Second, it had to be both a member of the I.C.W. and the European Trade Consortium. But the shutting down bit bothered Arthur. The impression he had was that Charenwell had shut its connection or at the very least had restricted the connection to and from Britain. This was not a usual course of events and he knew it. The last time he was aware of such an action was during the last Wizard War when Europe had closed or restricted such travel with Britain in the hopes of containing that problem. Arthur quietly wondered whether Charenwell's action was isolated or part of a general restriction imposed against Britain due to the renewed Death Eater activity.

The first real indication that this Charenwell place was somehow different was not the transportation arrangements themselves. True, despite his curiosity Arthur had never actually flown on an airplane. There never had been the need. However, it was not like a wizard on a plane was wholly unheard of. Muggle Borns had no issue with such conveyances and a fair few magicals with non-magical spouses or children had been known to use them as well. Even Aurors and the like had done so when duty required; usually when their transport to and from a foreign country needed to be off the magical books for security reasons. Thus the mere fact Bill had arranged for Arthur to fly alone did not seem wholly out of the possible.

But it was at that Gate in London when Arthur began to receive strong hints that this Charenwell place would be different. Including

himself and Poppy, there were ultimately fifty passengers waiting for the plane. All fifty were either magical or knew of magic which could hardly be considered a statistical coincidence. The flight crew clearly knew of magic as well as all passengers were instructed to place all magic objects into a pouch which was placed in a special bin at the back of the plane. This included all wands. The plane was painted red with white markings and writing. On the tail a large "AC" was painted in script above a much smaller set of a letters and numbers, none which made any sense to Arthur. Once on the plane, however, he saw that "AC" stood for "Air Charenwell." A brochure in the seat in front of him explained further that Air Charenwell was the flagship airline of the Duchy of Charenwell with charter service (only) to Paris, Madrid, Marseilles, Brussels, Amsterdam, Milan and Rome and new services opening to and from London, Dublin and Edinburgh. It further stated that it claimed to be the world's first and only magical airline. Whatever surprise he had at a magical airline was further compounded upon his arrival when he learned that his daughter was a pilot in training.

Still, although somewhat different, Arthur was sure that magical life in this Charenwell would not be that much different than England. Their "airline" only catered to magicals and those in the know, it seemed. Surely a magical could learn to fly a muggle plane without revealing their true nature. Arthur could not know that without magic it would be several weeks in not months before Ginny could expect to be where she was as a pilot.

At the airfield, Arthur gathered up his things and his wand and waited as Ginny changed from her flying clothes. Having been told this was a magical country, his limited experience suggested otherwise. They had travelled here on a Muggle airplane and the building he was waiting in, which had a sign that said "Flight Operations" outside, looked very Muggle indeed. He might not know the proper words, but the place had electric lights and the bloke at the counter was clearly talking to someone of a muggle communication devise – a telephone. Poppy was seated on a couch along the wall and told Arthur someone was picking her up.

Ginny soon returned dressed in a very Muggle looking outfit in that it was a dress and sandals and not a robe and boots which would have

been considered "proper" attire for magical places such as Diagon Alley, the Ministry and Hogsmeade back in Britain. She was accompanied by two other young women who she introduced as Tabatha Black and Stacey Potter, two of Harry's other wives or bondmates. It turned out they were also Poppy's "ride." Arthur and Poppy followed the teenagers out the other side of the building to what looked like a Muggle car park and to a Muggle vehicle called a Land Rover. The girl introduced as Stacey was apparently the driver.

Everything looked Muggle to Arthur. In addition to cars and phones, he could see the wires strung between poles that carried electricity. Perhaps the country was more "magical" than Britain, but it sure looked Muggle.

"Bill said this country was very magical," Arthur began.

"It is," Ginny replied.

"But a car? Why not Floo?" Poppy asked.

"You can't see anything using the Floo," Ginny said verbally rolling her eyes. "We're heading to Pottersport for lunch before driving to the Manor. Best way to see things really," Ginny said. "Well, maybe a broom would be better but not all of us fly that way and besides, this is an operational airfield and a broom here would be dangerous to its rider what with the planes and all. You might see some when we leave the restricted air space."

"See some?" Poppy asked. "But what about the Muggles?"

"We don't call them that," Stacey said. "They're Non-magicals here and they know all about magic so most of those secrecy laws you know about don't exist at all."

"But ekeltricty...?" Arthur began.

"Electricity," Tabatha said. "Yes, we have that as well. We have telephones, television, computers and any other technology that is more useful, more efficient or better than magical substitutes. We still use owls for letters, but we do have FedEx for packages and such.

They say it's the best of both worlds and without a lot of the baggage magical Britain is stuck with."

"Only thing missing are some decent magical schools," Ginny said, "but Minerva's working on that."

"Do you mean Professor McGonagall?" Poppy asked.

"Professor Potter might be more accurate," Ginny said, "seeing as she's the second wife in House Potter."

"Excuse me?"

"Who's she married to?" Arthur asked.

"She's been the bound Concubine of the Head of House Potter for fifty-three years," Ginny said. "Harry inherited her and..."

"But how can they be married?"

"Same way I am," Ginny replied. "The same way Stacey is the fourth Lady Potter, I'm the fifth and Tabatha's the fifth Lady Black. Harry's allowing our bonds to reach full maturity. As it stands for now we are kind of in between. We're not truly concubines for now, but that bond is not fully mature which means if he dies, we can become concubines again. But give it a few months and we'll be Potters or Blacks for the rest of our lives."

"How?" Arthur asked.

"It will certainly be the case once we have his kids," Stacey said.

"You're...?" Arthur began.

"Don't know yet," Ginny said. "But I hope so."

"You're not even fifteen!" Arthur said.

"First, I will be tomorrow," Ginny replied. "Second, if you think this will interfere in my studies, it won't. Minerva says she has it all worked

out. Even if I am going to complete the bond and have Harry's child soon, I will also complete my education. Minerva' confident we will all finish early. Besides, Daddy, by giving me up this was an option. In fact, given what usually happens back in Britain, this is the best you could have hoped for. I am a wife to Harry and not a slave as I might have been for just about anyone else. Okay, I'm one of twenty-five wives – if you include his Blacks – but a wife nonetheless. And I'm damn proud of it. I've gotten to do all sorts of things I'd never have done otherwise like learn to fly airplanes..."

"And we met the Queen and Prime Minister," Stacey asked.

"Queen?"

"Of Britain," Stacey added.

"I missed out on the Queen," Tabatha noted. "That was the day before I came. But they're right. If you had told me about any of this a month ago I would have said you're mad. Slavery and harems in this day and age? But done properly, it seems to work. Then there's this whole coven thing."

"Coven?" the two adults asked.

"The Muggle Queen?" Arthur added after a second.

"Yep," Stacey said. "To both, really. It seems House Potter has been allied to the Crown for centuries and Her Majesty visits every year. There was a big to do up at the castle when she arrived with a ball and everything. As for the coven thing, we're still researching that and what all it means. We know we're in one and that ours is not the only one either in the history of House Potter – although it's been a couple centuries since the last known one – or at this time. House Longbottom and the three Weasley Houses are covens as well."

"But that's dark magic," Arthur began.

"Rubbish!" Tabatha said. "It's anti-pureblood magic since the coven bond does not seek or promote blood purity. You're government labels any magic that does not promote Purebloods and Wizard

supremacy 'dark' and as covens by their magic does not distinguish roles by gender and allow all members to have a voice as it were, it does not support the Pureblood Wizard world view, hence it must be dark."

"There's not a lot about covens in print in Europe," Stacey added, "at least not that you can order. Parvati and Padma..."

"Who?"

"They're sisters," Ginny said. "They're from India and were at Hogwarts with us."

"Oh."

"Anyway," Stacey continued, "they've ordered some books on the subject from India but they haven't arrived yet. Fortunately, some of the Potter ladies of the past kept very extensive journals so we do have some information about what a coven entails."

"It can best be summed up as the sum being better than its parts," Ginny added. "As that bond matures, we all become more powerful and more magical..."

"And more skilled," Tabatha added.

"... than we could ever hope to be otherwise. We are all bonded to Harry by love of some kind and through him; we are bonded to all his other ladies. This bond includes a combining of our magic in a way. All of us will be more powerful than before although we can't say by how much. If one of us knows a magic, the rest of us can learn it very quickly. Minerva is using that to tailor our educations. She thinks even the youngest of us can complete their magical education in as little as three years start to finish because of that aspect of our bonds."

"Is that all?" Poppy asked.

"That's all we know for certain," Ginny said. "We know the magic bit is true. It's how we test for a coven."

"Oh?"

"In our case, we tested by doing a patronus charm. True, a few of us know it and could do it before, but most had never done one. They all managed on their first or second try."

"And don't forget," Tabatha said, "we all have the same patronus."

Ginny nodded. "We think that's related."

"What is it?" Poppy asked.

"Harry's is a Stag so all of ours are the same regardless of what they were before."

"And quite powerful ones at that," Stacey added. "Oh! You might want to take a look around. We're coming up on Charlestown. It's got a farmer's market that's wonderful and this area is probably the largest magical plant – er – farming region in Europe if not the world. Something like eighty percent of the food you ate in magical Britain comes from Charenwell and we are the largest supplier of potions ingredients in Europe for certain. Then again, since we don't have to hide everything from Muggles, we can grow acres and acres of stuff instead of just what you can get from a small greenhouse."

"We have those as well," Ginny said. "We'll be passing them. We also grow a lot of plants that need climates different than what we have. Charlie's checking out the dragon farms on the other side of the Island..."

"Charlie?" Arthur asked.

Ginny nodded. "He arrived yesterday apparently as a – um – offering of good faith?"

"What do you mean?"

"Wasn't it in the papers?"



"I wouldn't know," Arthur said. "Haven't bothered with the papers in a couple of weeks."

"Oh. Well about a week ago the Hungarian Horntails fled the reserve in Romania after burning the Keeper village to the ground. They took Charlie and Tatiana with them..."

"Tatiana?"

"Charlie's wife and Consort," Ginny said. "They met at the reserve and apparently the dragons liked them and brought them with them when they left. The lot of them arrived here yesterday around dawn. Harry had a long talk with their queen who was, apparently, the dragon he faced in the First Task and the flock is now hanging about and settling in."

"Flock?"

"Thirty-six of them," Ginny said.

"You have thirty-six dragons out and about?" Poppy asked.

"No, just thirty-six Horntails," Tabatha said. "There's about a hundred and fifty Charenwell Reds in the rookery offshore."

"What's that?"

"The dragons native to these islands," Tabatha said.

"They're pretty cool," Stacey added, "although I've never been close to them. The Horntails look scary and probably are if riled, but seem nice enough."

"Just so you know, as Duke Harry is allied with the Horntail Clan as well as a herd of hippogriffs. We have two hippogriffs and a Horntail at the Manor right now."

"Why?"

"They keep an eye on things around and about," Ginny said. "The ones at the manor are there to relay messages to their kind and to us from their kind if the need arises."

"That and they'd scare the living hell out of anyone who wanted to cause any mischief," Tabatha added.

"So Charlie's here too?" Arthur asked after a long pause.

Ginny nodded. "And Fred and George," she added. "Bill works for Gringotts out of their Charenwell Branch in Pottersport. Fred and George are setting up business here. Charlie's been hired to work with our three groups of dragons. We also have a hybrid breed that is bred for dragon stuff. Apparently, we are also the largest supplier of dragon stuff in the world and that's without hunting any in the wild."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Throughout the afternoon, Arthur wondered whether and to what extent Ginny was having him on. They indeed went to Pottersport and ate at an outdoor café on Front Street looking out over the harbor. It served sea food, another Charenwell specialty apparently and was quite good. It was odd. Everything looked Muggle, but it was clear as well that magic was in the open. What was odd was it was less noticeable than in places like Diagon Alley. Arthur began to think that because they did not have to hide it at all, there was no need for the people of this country to show it when they could. The table was set with magic and their meals appeared magically. There were magic shops on Sir Galahad Street and High Street, but loads of non-magical shops as well. If Arthur were to guess, there was more shopping available than in Diagon Alley and apparently there was another large shopping district in a place called Port of Darby over a hundred miles to the east.

The girls were apparently well known to the people, or at least well recognized. The people were friendly and not as obsequious as the class oriented magicals back in Britain. They even met the shopping expedition from the Manor while showing Arthur and Poppy High Street. It was an enjoyable afternoon in many ways, although for some reason no one talked about the airplanes.

They then drove to the Manor, up the bluff and past the castle, which Ginny said was now the seat of the government although technically it still belonged to Harry. They drove through the fields and hills, through Potter's Vineyard where Ginny pointed out Martha's were Harry took his family to brunch every Sunday morning. Eventually, they drove up the drive to the manor itself.

It was impressive, to say the least. Arthur could not begin to imagine how large the places really were. It was larger than any manor he had ever been to. Sure enough, there was a dragon on the large lawn looking bored and two hippogriffs flanking the main entrance. The creatures seemed unconcerned by their arrival. Then again, three of the people lived there and the other two were obvious guests. The inside of the Manor was even more stunning. Arthur and Poppy were shown to guest rooms in the large new wing called Black House by and elf and then escorted to dinner.

Dinner was a large affair as all the Houses were in attendance. Arthur was not sure which was a larger surprise. Harry truly did have twenty-five wives and they all seemed happy. The truth was he had not seen this side of Ginny since before first year. The moody girl was gone and the talkative, smiling girl he missed was back. Bill was there with Fleur and his other wives as were Fred and George. Arthur was certain it would take weeks to get all the names straight. Charlie was there as well with his wife Tatiana. Arthur sat with Ginny during dinner as well as Katie Bell and the Patil twins who spent most of the time talking about covens. Poppy sat with Minerva at another table. Arthur still found it hard to believe that she was married to Harry.

After dinner, the whole crowd followed Harry to a large room that reminded Arthur of a cross between Courtroom 10 at the ministry and an auditorium. Harry and others took their seats at a large, horse shoe shaped table while Ginny led Arthur to the gallery of seats behind. They were joined by a few people Arthur knew. He was surprised to see Remus, Kingsley and Moody there. He was even more surprised when they were joined by what looked like members of the Muggle Military.

"Right then," Harry said. "I guess we begin with the attempted invasion."

Remus stood and gave a description of the Ministry's failed invasion attempt going over the events in detail. Arthur was stunned that the Ministry would try such a thing. Apparently, he was not the only one.

"So let me get this straight," one of the military types said, "the British magicals tried to invade and got their ass handed to them?"

"In a manner of speaking," Kingsley said. "They sent thirty six imposters posing as the young ladies Lord Potter requested. Twenty of those were marked Death Eaters. The Death eaters and four others died crossing the ward line. Of the remaining twelve, nine have requested asylum and the other three have asked to be allowed to relocate here with their families. Those requests were granted. In addition, the ministry sent an additional fifty witches and wizards on brooms in an attempt to follow our planes. Only one made it here alive, ironically she's the daughter of the Minister for Magic and has also requested and been granted asylum. Twenty-one of the others never returned and are presumed dead, although I can't say if any of them were marked. That's forty-five of eighty-six dead and thirteen having either defected or are considering it. Their total losses stand at fifty-eight. As for the Death Eaters, we've rid Azkaban of their connection and their Operations side lost two thirds of its remaining effectives. Voldemort's got six trained wands left, nine if you include three who are still recovering from the July 1st attacks."

"You can add the two high level Death Eater moles Potter and Tonks killed in the Ministry with Umbridge," Moody said. "The Death Eaters took a hell of a hit."

"Must be nice," one of the military types said. "Just sit behind the wards and nothing can touch you."

"It's not that unusual a situation," General Churchill said. "While it wasn't magic, the Yanks had the same advantage for ages. In both World Wars they were impervious to attack for all practical purposes."

"And Pearl Harbor?" another asked.

"Was a colony, for all practical purposes," Churchill said. "What was there? What did the Japanese achieve? They sunk or damaged eight antiquated battleships, six of which were back in the war within two years. They did not dent the Yanks ability to build up its forces. For the Yanks, they could build their forces at their leisure and not waste much on defense. Took 'em a bit to see that but when they did they even abandoned their coast artillery and sent those soldiers off to the fight. The trick for them was getting their armies to where they were needed and keeping them there. The situation here is analogous. Charenwell can raise a force without worry about invasion, but that force is of little use here. The trick will be getting it to where it's needed."

"And the hit team? Was that necessary?"

"The Ministry is led by arrogant gits," Remus said. "They are so full of themselves it's disgusting. The hit team was sent to deliver a message: we can get you. Hopefully, they'll stop the silly games."

"And if not?"

"As you said, the trick for us is getting to them. They can't get to us."

"And going there is risky to say the least," Harry added. "We were lucky. We sent a largely untrained force at them and came out ahead – and I include myself in that. It could easily have gone pear shaped. Next time – and unless something changes there will be a next time – I don't want to rely on relative amateurs."

"Hence our presence," General Churchill said.

"And recruiting," Remus added. "As of yesterday, we have close to two thousand volunteers enrolled and that's excluding our ladies who are already in training or slated to begin in the next month or so."

"Better than I hoped," Harry said. "Honestly, I was expecting the bulk of the recruits to come from the evacuation."

"General," Remus said, "we may well be looking at between eight and ten thousand for the Army when all is said and done. Six for certain. We also believe we will exceed the manning needs for the Air Force."

General Churchill nodded. "We'll plan for that possibility, but until they're in the pipeline, we can't count them. We can handle those numbers given your timeframe. You're still not planning a large scale assault before 1998?"

"Not unless events force it," Harry said. "My guess is this past week has made that date more certain than less."

"Fair assessment," Kingsley said. "Voldemort will need a year or more to recover from this summer and even then he's lost a lot of experienced people. Bodies and wands can be replaced, experience is much harder. Realistically, it will take years to get back to where he was just two months ago. Then again, the Ministry took a hit as well. He might not need to be as prepared to be effective as he once was."

"So, in all probability, we have eighteen months?" Air Vice Marshall Graham asked.

"That appears more realistic than it did a week ago," Harry nodded.

"Might help us big time on the technical side," Graham continued.

"You're not pushing those engines again..."

"No Milord. Some of my tech boys have been talking with your Twin Terrors. After that magical range enhancement your ground crews showed us, we're thinking magical stuff and those two have some ideas."

"Cant' say they'll work," Fred began.

"But we'll give it a go," George added

"What sort of ideas?" Harry asked.

"Oh this and that," Fred said.

"All of this is mostly thinking now," George added. "Aside from the Potions factory that it."

"Potions factory?"

"Yep. Got some cool ideas from a Muggle book and stuff. We figure a lot of potions can be made on a line or some such. Instead of a Potions Master making a pint here and a pint there, we're pretty sure we can set up an operation that'll pump it out in gallons and gallons."

"Won't even need a Potions Master except as a senior tech supervisor," Fred said. "Most the operation can be run by people with far less training."

"Muggles even," George said. "But we were already thinking 'bout that before we came here."

"We now have the means to make it happen, what with these defense contracts and such."

"But we got newer ideas."

"Such as?" Harry said.

"Ward bombs and shells," George began.

"Assuming we can get them to work."

"They go boom and either drop a ward or throw one up."

"Magic guided bombs," Fred added. "We adapt a muggle smart bomb to home in on a magical signature..."

"Like a ward," George said.

"We nicked a ministry ward stone from their detection grid during our little trip the other day," Fred said. "We're hoping it'll prove useful. At

the very least, we might find a way to take the grid down in places in less time."

"At most, we might be able to tap into it and collect information..."

"Or turn it against them."

"No idea if it'll work..."

"Replenishing ammo boxes," Fred said placing a small, black box like thing on the table. "This is a magazine from one of the Muggle rifles the army will get," he said looking at some notes. "The F1A1 it's called. Was standard issue for the Muggles until recently and they got loads of them. This box holds the bullets and feeds them into the rifle somehow. That bit's not important. The box holds twenty rounds of ... NATO 7.63 millimeter. Not much."

"What if it held ... oh ... five hundred rounds?"

"What?" a few voices asked.

"We think we can set something up that would turn this into a magical conduit," George said. "We can't make bullets from nothing magically. You'd still need them stockpiled somewhere. But we think we can make this feed from a larger stock of bullets."

"And where would those bullets be?" a colonel asked.

"Can't say yet," Fred replied. "We think if we base it on portkey arithmancy, they could be here in Charenwell, at least until this box summons one to replace the one just loaded."

"Otherwise, a few miles," George said.

"The key thing being the soldier would have a couple thousand rounds at the ready, not a hundred or so."

"And there other things as well."

"It could simplify certain of the logistics," another soldier said.



"Not to mention increase unit firepower," another added.

"Basically Milord," the general said, "any one of their ideas is a potential benefit to your combat forces."

Harry nodded. "Drawbacks?"

"We'd need a large plant and facilities for both development and production," Fred said.

"And it could well distract us from our joke shop."

"But for a good cause."

Harry nodded. "Right. Whatever you need, but try not to waste time on an idea that's not about to work."

"You footing the bill?" Fred asked.

Harry shrugged. "I seem to be footing it everywhere else."

"Thanks, your Dukeness," Fred said.

"You won't regret it," George added.

Harry nodded. "General?"

"Force multipliers," he said. "While we hope the Lord Mayor is right in his estimates, we are working under the assumption that your ground forces will number between four and six thousand. That's four to six battalions and probably more, not much at all really when you consider the size of the prize."

"Pardon my ignorance but battalions?" Harry asked.

"Right," the general replied. "We're not going to set you up as a carbon copy of our own army, you lot being magical and all and not being organized to stop tanks and the red hoards pouring over the North German Plain. Your Army's basic unit will be the infantry

company, a hundred sixty-six men in four platoons of forty with a small command section. Three platoons will have four squads of foot soldiers and can include up to four light machine guns. The fourth platoon will be heavy weapons and support: machine guns, mortars, rockets and sappers.

"We envision three possible Battalion configurations: Light, Medium and Heavy. A light Battalion would be three companies, plus a command section, signal and medical; five hundred and seventy men. A medium section, most likely your Paras, would add an artillery section and number about eight hundred. A heavy Battalion would add Engineers and a support company and number about a thousand men. Given what we know of your enemy, your battalions may well be your largest combat unit, although we might consider Brigade as well, but we'll make that recommendation when it is feasible and necessary."

"What would be a Brigade?" Harry asked.

"A Brigade would be any combination of two or more infantry battalions under a single combat command staff with additional support units. You'd probably include engineers, more artillery and a field hospital. We're trying to make you lot as flexible as possible because even though your bad guys will not have a large order of battle, even at the Lord Mayor's numbers, it's still an awful lot of ground to take and hold. Anything that enhances their combat effectiveness is welcome."

Harry nodded. "Ireland," he growled changing the topic.

"What?" a few voices asked.

"It's been bothering me practically since Her Majesty asked for our help," Harry said. "Ireland that is. It's part of magical Britain and therefore part of the objective. Yet only the counties in the north are part of non-magical Britain. Most the island is not and that part has no relation with our world that I'm aware of. What we did the other day in Wiltshire, we couldn't hope to even try in Cork. The British Muggles let us in. I can't say the Irish would be as accommodating right now. That is the problem. We might be able to send Battalions into Britain.

But were we to try the same thing in the Republic of Ireland we might well find ourselves at war with the Muggles. Yet to do nothing, and we leave a huge area where our enemy can retreat and we can't easily follow. Not without risking a much wider war than we are willing to fight. I don't want to risk that. Moreover, taking Britain will be hard enough. Ireland would add a whole separate campaign to our already full plate. We need to figure out a way to take it out of the equation without involving a major military effort if possible."

"You don't have the same concern about the Continent?" General Churchill asked.

"Not at the moment," Harry began.

"This past week, we had significant discussions with the French Minister for Magic who was visiting and the Ambassadors from Magical Scandinavia, Spain, Portugal and United Germany," Remus said. "While they are not absolutely closing their borders, they will be imposing travel restrictions that would effectively deny the enemy aid, support or refuge on or from the Continent. After Thursday's little excitement, it is a fair bet the I.C.W. will impose even more stringent restrictions. But the Duke is correct about Ireland. It is part of Magical Britain and such restrictions cannot be imposed at this time."

"The good news about Ireland is that it has never been a major source of support or recruitment for the Death Eaters and generally ignores the Ministry so far as such is possible," Kingsley added. "My experience is they would prefer that the rest of us stay on our side of the Irish Sea."

"We have eighteen months at least to figure out a way to safely ignore Ireland," Harry said. "I don't expect an answer today. I just want you all to start thinking about it."

"Next item on my list ... the Evacuation. Minerva and Dora have accumulated sufficient responses that, given the current state of readiness both here at The Manors and in Jamestown and given the current state of our little Airline, we can begin the evacuation. The first flights will leave London Monday. One flight a day will carry

families of the wives and three will be dedicated to other evacuees for now. We hope to be up to ten flights a day by September.

"Next up, the thirty-six concubines we brought over from Britain on Thursday. We need to find them homes and I'd prefer not to take on any more if possible. Suggestions?"

"I've been talking with Tatiana and my brothers," Charlie said. "We'd be willing to help."

"Oi! Who's we?" Fred asked.

"I meant Tatiana and I would be willing."

"I'll take some more if need be," Remus said. "Although as Lord Mayor, I would prefer they all be Charenwell girls."

"We'll help as well," a female voice said. It was Alice Longbottom.

"We will?" Frank asked.

"We're already a part of this, Frank. Our son has or will have nineteen ladies to care for; surely we can help as well."

"Fine."

"How do you lot afford...?" Arthur began before he wondered if he was even allowed to speak.

"The Duke is providing financial support to the extent needed," Hermione said. "Housing will be provided and allowances for food, clothing, children, education and other support. Their welfare is his concern and ours as well. True, we do expect the Heads of Houses to seek gainful employment, but they should not need worry about supporting their households. This ... program ... is not for the – er – pleasures and appetites of men, rather it is for the welfare of those women."

Arthur nodded. "I ... well, that is ... I've left my home, career and what passed for a wife. Arguably, I have nothing better to do with my time."

"I'm sure we can find something for you, Mr. Weasley," Harry said.

"I just want to help."

"So you're willing to take on a few of these women under the conditions we specify? You do know what those conditions are, don't you?"

Arthur nodded. "Ginny and the boys have told me. I'll help if you ask it of me."

"Shouldn't say that unless you mean it, Dad," Fred said.

"I mean I want to help," Arthur said.

Harry nodded. "Right then. Hermione?"

"A moment please?" she replied.

Arthur turned to Ginny. "What's this?"

"Hermione's been the one – um – arranging who gets how many," Ginny said. "I heard Fred call her the Witch Bitch, once. Not being mean, just a crude way of saying what her unofficial role in this is."

"Oh. I'm surprised she'd take part..."

"Things happen," Ginny shrugged. "The more she's learned about this, the more she wants to help girls like them. She was the one who convinced Harry to take on additional 'wives' after all, although Harry has made it clear she gets to explain it to her parents when they arrive."

"They're coming?"

Ginny nodded. "Monday."

"Um..."

"Okay," Hermione announced. "Here's the deal. Nine girls each to the four of you. Each of you will take at least one non Charenwell witch. I think it's best if they are bound first as they don't have the luxury of having family to visit. Please let me know when you want the others to arrive so we can contact them. Daphne?"

"Yes Hermione?" the other witch answered.

"You think you and your sister might be up for a shopping trip Monday? The ten girls from Britain probably need it."

"Why not tomorrow?" Daphne asked.

"Ginny's birthday," Hermione said.

"Oh yeah. Sure."

"Great!"

There seemed to be a break in presentations. Ginny turned to her father. "You really are going to take those girls in?"

Arthur nodded.

"You do realize what that means, right?"

"Um..."

"The full bond is the goal, Daddy. You will have to accept them as full partners in all things. You will be expected to sleep with them and father their children and..."

"I understand. I'm not saying I'm not concerned about it, though. After what happened with your mother..."

"The one advantage the bond has is trust, Dad. What happened with Mother cannot happen under these bonds. From the start, they will not be able to hurt you intentionally or betray you at all. Once the bond matures to the next level, it will work like that both ways. It's quite wonderful, actually."

"And Consorts, does this preclude a Consort?"

"You'd think it might," Ginny replied. "But it does not. Remus was already Love Bonded to at least some of his ladies when Stephanie became his Consort. Fred and George had two Concubines each when Alicia and Angelina became their Consorts. I don't know if those bonds were Love Bonds yet or not. Harry was Love Bonded to three Blacks and Two Potters when Luna became his Black Consort. The only requirement there seems to be she initiates it and you have the position open."

"Did the Consorts know?"

"Of course. Moreover, in the cases of Hermione, Fleur, Susan, Alice and now Tatiana, they had to approve of the other bonds before hand."

"Can I ask you a personal question?" Arthur continued.

Ginny snorted. "You can ask."

"Are ... are you happy?"

Ginny looked at him and smile.

"I'll be honest, Dad. At the time, when you turned me over to Harry at Gringotts I didn't know what to think except my life was over. I was right about that bit. My life as I knew it was over. Fred, George and especially Bill and Fleur talked to me a bit just before Harry bound me to him and told me it was not what I thought it was and they were right too. I was disappointed in you that day. I still hate Mother for what she did to our family. Yet, because of her, I'm here. Harry, Hermione, Luna and the others in our large family all gave me far more of a chance than I deserved and have gone out of their way to let me be a full member of their family – our family. Okay, it's not at all what I wanted a couple months ago. I wasn't sure about Harry. He was a possibility only. What I wanted was romance, wedding and all that. Kind of skipped the romance bit, but Harry is making that up to all of us because he really never dated any of us, not even Hermione.

Each of us gets a date with him – and another of his girls – about once a week and birthday's – like mine tomorrow – is our time with him. As for the wedding, I kind of had something similar at the ball for the Queen, but Harry's even willing to do that for us if we want. I have more friends now than ever. I'm closer to my brothers than ever as well. I'll get to finish my education, fly in the Air Force and do whatever I want with my life. Harry makes me feel special. Don't ask me how he manages that with twenty-four others and a betrothed, but he does. In a way, as hard as it was at the time, that day in Gringotts was the best day in my life because it led to where I am now. Yes, Daddy, I believe I'm happy."

"Do you think I..."

"I know you'll do right by those women, Dad."

Arthur nodded as he noticed Minerva McGonagall getting up as the talking around him ceased.

"Our final bit," Harry said, "will be an overview of our continuing education for those of us in the various families here at The Manors."

"Right then," Minerva said. "In addition to my job for the government as Head of Educational Development where our mission is to open up a magical school system for all children in Charenwell beginning in the Fall Term of next year, I have also been asked to come up with an educational program for the Families, those being what are imprecisely referred to as Harems. The goal of that planning is to continue the magical education of the Duke, Lord Longbottom and all the wives and Concubines associated with the Houses Black, Potter, Longbottoms, Lupin and all Weasleys. In addition, as many of the families of the various wives and concubines are relocating to Charenwell and the new town called The Manors – just down the road from here – and as most of those families have children who either are attending a magical school or are supposed to start a magical school this fall, the program I've been asked to prepare must necessarily include them. Finally, this program must also address and assist those among us whose educations were cut short when they became Concubines. I believe we have a program that is flexible, will allow for all students to achieve the best possible education in the



shortest possible time and will allow them to sit for their I.C.W. examinations.

"It is also a bit of an experiment.

"First of all, rather than try and staff a program that provides for seven separate years of instruction, what I have devised is one that covers the same material in three separate levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Students completing the Intermediate Level of instruction will sit for their O.W.L.s; those completing the Advanced Level will sit for their N.E.W.T.s. All three levels will offer and require their students to take Charms, Defense Against the Dark Arts, Herbology, History, Potions and Transfiguration. Basic and Intermediate Levels will also require Astronomy. Intermediate and Advanced Levels will require Arithmancy, Ancient Runes and Care of Magical Creatures. The Advanced Level will also require a basic Healing course. We will not be offering either Muggle Studies or Divination."

"Why not?" Arthur asked.

"Divination is a waste," Minerva said. "One either has the talent or they do not. If a student has the talent, we'll work with that. Otherwise there is plenty of resource material available for them to read at their leisure. As for Muggle Studies, here we are fairly integrated and, as there are no secrecy laws in effect, it too is of little utility. In case you've not been told, Arthur, there's not a Muggle in the country who is not well acquainted with magic.

"Anyway, Advanced Level courses will be offered to all students who completed courses through the end of their Fifth Year regardless of whether they sat for the O.W.L.s and regardless of their marks. From what I have been told having spoken with every potential student here and having access to materials – er – liberated from the various schools in Britain, I don't see that as a significant problem. Regardless of Level, the class sizes will be small. The largest class will have only about twenty students. As I have also arranged at least two instructors for most of our offerings, I feel that the additional attention will overcome most difficulties and while I do have a schedule I am confident that many of our students will finish ahead of

schedule. Assuming they stay on the schedule, those starting off at the Basic Levels can expect to sit for their O.W.L.s in June of 1999 and their N.E.W.T.s in August of 2000. Those students in the Intermediate Levels will sit for their O.W.L.s in March of 1998 and their N.E.W.T.s in May of 1999. Finally, those in the Advanced Levels this fall will sit for their N.E.W.T.s in October of next year. I have already received preliminary approval waiving O.W.L. requirements for the Advanced Levels for those taking such levels beginning this year only.

"Okay then Basic Levels. All students who are either eleven years of age on or before September 1st of this year or have completed First or Second Year Courses will be in the Basic Level. I have also offered former Third Years the option of taking basic levels if they choose and a few have. We have fifty-one basic level students and they will be divided into three sections of seventeen students each. They will be taking Astronomy, Charms, Defense, Herbology, History, Potions and Transfiguration.

"The Intermediate Levels will be all other former Third Year Students and all of last year's Fourth Year Students. In addition to continuing the Basic Courses, they will all take the three 'elective' Courses: Ancient Runes, Arithmancy and Care of Magical Creatures. There are thirty six students in the Intermediate Level. For Charms, Defense, Herbology, Potions and Transfiguration, they will be in three sections of twelve students. For Astronomy and History, they will be in five sections of seven to eight students. For Runes, Arithmancy and Care of Magical Creatures, they will also be in five sections, but they will be joined by Advanced Level Students who did not take those courses before. Including those advanced students, those sections vary from ten to eighteen students.

"Finally, the Advanced Levels. These are all students who have completed Fifth Year. There will be eighty-four students taking Advanced Levels in Charms, Defense, Healing, Herbology, History, Potions and Transfiguration divided into five sections of sixteen to seventeen students. Those who completed Fifth Year work in Runes, Arithmancy and Care of Magical Creatures will continue in the Advanced Levels in five sections ranging in size from four to ten

students. The others will be placed in the corresponding Intermediate level courses."

"How can you move them forward so fast?" Arthur asked. "You're talking N.E.W.T.s in a little over four years for a child who never held a wand before!"

"Good question," Minerva said. "The I.C.W. minimum standards are three hours of Potions, Charms, Transfiguration and Defense per academic week and two hours in all other approved courses for a minimum of thirty eight weeks per academic year. That's five hundred and seventy class hours before your O.W.L.s in the Big Four, three hundred and eight for the other first year courses and two hundred and twenty-eight for the electives. This fall, we will only be running half days to accommodate the flight training. Even so, each student will receive two and a half hours of instruction in all their course per week. That's forty-two and a half hours for the fall for all courses. In the spring, we go to full days with five hours per week in the Big Four and three and a half in all the others. They will have a hundred and thirty-five hours instruction in the Big Four this spring and ninety-four and a half in all others. Next fall, their full day loads will be eight-five hours in the Big Four and fifty-nine and a half in all others. Basically, because their class days will be at least half again as long as they were and they will have at least six extra weeks of class each calendar year, they can easily pace ahead of the rest. To be honest, given other factors I believe most will actually finish ahead of this schedule."

"Still, it seems a bit much."

"There are several factors working in our favor," Minerva said. "First of all is location. The school has been built on a line running from Black House to The Manors Lake and is half way between the two. Almost every student either lives here or will live in The Manors, and can easily walk to the school if they choose. It will also be accessible by Floo for all students. Thus, the students can live at home throughout the year and still have access to the facilities as if they boarded there. Given the family arrangements of most students, boarding is not an option."

"Second are the facilities. Excluding faculty facilities, the school has three potions labs, three greenhouses for herbology and a connection to the greenhouses in Charlestown for field work, two classrooms for creatures and a floo connection to the National Preserve for field work, nine classrooms for spell work and ten other classrooms for Astronomy, History, Runes, Healing and Arithmancy. The entire facility will be under a special time charm during the academic day. Classes start at nine and end at four, but fourteen hours will pass for faculty and students during that time so there will be breaks for them. And in case you're wondering, unlike a time turner this charm is neutral. Neither the students nor their unborn children will age at an accelerated rate so no worries there. We also have an extensive library on site as well as an infirmary although we hope the only need for the latter will be for maternity checks and maybe the occasional delivery. There are also some large lounges, recreational rooms and study rooms for students to use between classes and a large dining facility for lunch.

"Most critical of all is the size of the faculty in relation to the student body. There will be a hundred and seventy-one students attending when classes start in a couple of weeks. At Hogwarts, for example, there are twelve professors total. That's one for every 33 students and that number is deceptive. I taught all Transfiguration Classes. I had around two hundred and eight-five students through their O.W.L.s. This fall, we'll have 20 professors. That's one for every eight students. In the Spring, each level will have its own professors in its courses. The most any one professor will need worry about are the eighty-four students in some of the Advanced Levels, that's less than I was responsible for as Head of House. It will be much easier for us to attend to students needs as there will be more of us to go around. Likewise, the Basic Level students do not have to worry that their Potions Professor is dealing with his O.W.L. students. We think this will inure to the benefit of all."

"And training and operations?" Air Vice Marshall Graham asked. "Even when they complete training, it never really stops. Not if they want to do any good over the battle area. They'll need several hours a week at least."

"We can adjust the school wards to allow that additional time to meet both needs come spring term."

Arthur listened to additional discussion on other topics, namely the situation regarding dragons and hippogriffs, but for the most part he was left thinking about all he had learned that day. He had a feeling that in the long run coming to this country was going to prove to be the best decision.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.  
SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).

12. Eleanor May (Bromstone) Potter-Black, age 13 (Hu-2).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Cathy Alicia (Abrams) Black-Potter, age 12 (Hu-1).
1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P
8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally (Broadmoor) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).
16. Bonnie Faith Carter, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).
16. Su Li, age 16 (Ra-5).
17. Morag Coleen (McDougal) Longbottom, age 16 (Ra-5).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*
5. Rachel Francine (Peters) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD).P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P

4. Alice Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5).
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura Carpenter, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.



DISCLAIMER: That part of this world and those characters you've seen before belong to their Creator: JKR. The rest is mine - although I cannot quit my day job as I make no \$\$\$

A/N: Not much to comment upon aside from sorry for the delay...

## CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE: TRANSITIONS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11th, 1996 – Martha's Restaurant, Potter's Vineyard, Charenwell.

Tatiana was concerned about this whole arrangement. She loved her Consort-husband dearly as she knew he loved her. He had been there for her all through their adventure with the dragons, both convinced they were on that next night's dragon menu. She knew he loved her dearly and would do anything for her, even die if necessary. She didn't want that, of course, but knowing she meant everything to him was amazing. But this new wrinkle was a strange twist. He and she had willingly accepted the notion of allowing nine unknown women to bond with him.

She had spent some time with his brothers' wives and Harry's as well. Not much, for it had only been a couple of days, but some. She knew Charlie's brothers' Consorts had also maybe grudgingly agreed to their new "sister" wives. She knew Hermione had as well. She also now understood this strange notion of family was not about the husband's ego, but about the wives' wellbeing. This new arrangement, when and if it happened was not about her or Charlie. They would always have what they had. It was or would be about the other "girls" and seeing to it that others had a life as well. Still, it was not totally easy to accept. But a short conversation with Hermione told her it could work. Hermione was a Muggle Born after all and as such brought up in a society that would consider a 'harem,' even if it was a coven, anathema at best, and yet the young woman seemed quite okay with the idea although Hermione had confessed it did bother her at first. And that scared her still, for tomorrow her parents would arrive and she was going to have to explain all of this to them. But the girl was convinced this was the right thing for the "ladies" in her new family and the inconveniences to her were minor compared to the opportunities this life could offer the others. Fleur said much the same

thing and her younger sister was now betrothed into one of these families.

These were not Harems, both Fleur and Hermione told her ... and Charlie's sister Ginny for that matter. The Consorts might be "first" but they were first among equals. There were no submissive slave girls here. Each was a woman in her own right and was or soon would be expected to stand out on her own and be a contributing part of her "family" and society as a whole. Tatiana could see the pride and determination in many of the young women she had met, be they Blacks, Potters, Weasleys or even the Longbottoms she had met. This was not about male libidos, but about family. She thought that was odd, but the more she saw, the more she realized that was probably truly the case.

She and Charlie were now guests of House Potter for the time being. They had quite literally arrived in Charenwell and on Harry's front lawn by dragon the very day House Longbottom was moving from their Third Floor rooms in Potter Manor to their new home in Longbottom House next door. Frank and Alice and their ladies moved as well. Originally, Frank and Alice were supposed to move into their own Manor on the lake to the north. That had changed. Neville had his Manor redesigned to fit all of them as he wanted his parents close. Frank, Alice and their ladies would live on the third floor of Longbottom House in large, private apartments while Neville and his ladies would occupy the First and Second Floors. The Ground Floor would be their common, public rooms. For Tatiana and Charlie, however, they had moved into the new Guest Rooms of Black House, as had Arthur and Poppy, although Tatiana was fairly certain those two were in separate rooms, unlike her and Charlie.

As guests, they were invited to join House Potter for the "traditional" Sunday, which seemed odd as this tradition was barely weeks old. Still, there they were with Arthur and Madam Pomfrey as well waiting out in front of Potter Manor with all of Harry's girls there, as well as Apolline Delacour, as a large Motor Couch (Bus, in North America) pulled around past where a dragon lay snoozing on the lawn and the two hippogriffs by the main entrance to the Manor. The door opened revealing an elf at the wheel and the group began to board. Tatiana overheard Poppy ask someone...

"Surely we could floo there?"

"But you can't see anything that way!" the young blonde protested. Tatiana remembered her being introduced as Astoria. "It's too lazy a morning and too pretty a country not to see it like this, although it was more cozy when we all could fit in a single motor car and let Harry drive us."

It was a lovely drive although Tatiana felt as if it was a tour of some sort. They turned left just before a couple of houses and she was told that just weeks before this road had been nothing but a horse trail. They were soon driving by very new looking houses, all designed to look as if they were part of an old village, she was told. The houses were all close to the street but were said to have deep gardens in back. Some looked like they already had residents and she learned that families of the 'Families' who were already here in Charenwell were already moving in. The rest of the town would come later.

They reached the town center and saw shops and offices and the like, many still vacant but some were already open. There was already a functioning grocery and another couple of stores for house wares and such, both magical and not. They passed around a small park surrounded by future shops and public buildings including the primary school, and then began to circle a lake. There was a huge building there. Tatiana was told it was a resort hotel for guests of the families and their families and such. It was already open, although that was a recent development as in within the last week. They drove around the lake and the "Manors" were pointed out. Tatiana's new bothers-in-law's Manors were almost done. They would begin moving in within the next week or so. Two others were clearly under construction for others "Families;" namely one which had originally had been for Frank and Alice Longbottom and the other for Lord Mayor Remus Lupin. None were as large or impressive as Potter Manor or Black or Longbottom House which were practically done, but these were impressive in their own right. When she was told that because she and her husband had agreed to "extend" their family they were going to have a house like these others built for them she was stunned almost literally.

They were also showed the lots on the lake where the new Manors could be built. It was a nice place to raise a family, Tatiana thought. If she was destined to be the head wife of a harem, this was a nice place to do that. There were woods and fields for the children to play in and the lake for swimming and boating one day and she had already been told about the beaches and mountains and such. They were twenty miles from Pottersport, the capitol of the Duchy and a place which she had heard was excellent from shopping and also about twenty miles from the new city of Jamestown which, it was said, would also be a place to do that. Add to it two colonies of dragons to study and in her mind it was becoming perfect.

Martha's was an experience. After the drive from The Manors through the countryside to Potter's Vineyard, she and the others alighted from the coach and immediately she knew this was a different place. First of all, a man named Richards chided Harry about his hair and suggested he needed a trim. Harry agreed and made an appointment for later that week. Then they ascended the stairs to this Martha's place and were met by the woman herself who seemed to know all of them except the newcomers, to whom she was introduced and welcomed all of them profusely. Harry's family came here every week and his friends were always welcome. Tatiana learned that Martha knew most of the new arrivals in all the families, at least the ones who had already been here, and most had.

"We're opening a new place soon," Martha said to Harry.

"Oh? But we like this place."

Martha laughed. "We're not closing this one, Harry. But this place is proving popular and we have enough money to expand it a bit. Come winter, dinning outside will become a problem. But with your Jamestown, we figure another place there will work as well. Our son will be running it and he's already hired a couple of the repatriated Charenwell girls from House Weasley to do my job for him as Hostesses. It'll be similar in many respects, including our fair weather deck for dining, but it will overlook the beach and ocean instead of the Vineyard and such."

"It sounds lovely, Martha," Minerva said.

"Much like this place, it'll be homegrown and handmade."

"May have to try it," Harry said. "But if you think we'd stop coming here for Sunday Brunch ... that's not going to happen. Maybe dinner with my wives?"

"We all hoped that's what you'd think," Martha said. "This way. Your table is ready outside."

Tatiana expected something fancy, or at least fancier than what the other patrons expected. What she saw was a large, long and very plain table with long benches on either side, simply a longer version of the kinds of tables the other patrons enjoyed. There was no chair at either the head or the foot of the table. Harry and the others merely took seats on the benches wherever they chose. It seemed very common for one who was said to be the Duke and regent or ruler of this country, but Harry seemed not to mind at all. Tatiana sat next to her Consort and Husband and across from them sat her new father-in-law and sister-in-law. To her right were several witches, all she could tell were speaking in French. Tatiana had some understanding of French. It was not much. It was not nearly as good as her Russian, Romanian or English. She was born Ukrainian and spoke that language or dialect her entire life. Russian was different, but not terribly so. English and Romanian were very different, but she managed to pick them up. After all, she worked in Romania and her Husband, while he had learned Romanian as well over the years, was English. She had merely studied French in school. But it did not seem to matter as the girl next to her named Connie translated to English when needed.

The very young girl was sitting with her mother who, to Tatiana's surprise, was also the wife of the French Minister for Magic, Charlie's older brother Bill's Mother-in-Law and now also the mother of the young girl betrothed to the Duke. With one other exception, that being Poppy Pomfrey, all the rest of the women at the table were the wives of this Duke and he was also betrothed to a girl who was not even ten? Having learned that much, Tatiana expected a depraved old man, a lecher, a pervert or something. But the Duke struck her as anything but that and it was clear his ladies were not what she

expected. They were all - at least the ones she had met - quite outspoken and seemed quite content with their lives.

Connie tried to explain what she and the others thought was happening. She said that at some point, Harry and the others had become a Coven. They knew this was true for that was how it was possible for Cissy to join them, but no one knew for sure what that truly meant aside from the fact that it did mean they were no longer true concubines. Harry's case was not unique, but his was the first case where all the witches had moved beyond the basic Concubine Bond at least in the West in the last few centuries. But one thing was certain, once the Wizard allowed enough of his ladies to allow their bonds to fully mature, this tended to trigger a Coven. It was true that some of Harry's girls' bonds would not reach full maturity for some time, but his promise that they would seemed to be binding. It was that promise of no exceptions and, possibly, a certain number who had moved beyond the basic Concubine Bond that created a Coven. Once this bond began to form, new additions could not resist it even if they had wanted to. But unlike the basic Concubine Bond, they retained who they were not just in private but in total. The Bond showed them what love could be and it was a hard promise to resist for anyone since it would happen if and when they let it.

She stated they really did not know much about Covens. There were no works on it available in Britain or the West for that matter. Western magicals considered Covens to be dark or at least dangerous. Covens were feared by non-magicals and may have been the reason why the non-magical persecution of magic fell almost entirely upon witches. Covens were, however, still common in the East and they were hoping there were some learned works on that subject available from Eastern sources. What works they did have on Covens were from the personal journals of Harry's ancestors and his ancestors' concubine wives.

Covens were exceedingly rare because they were exceedingly difficult to create. House Potter tended to try to form covens, at least through the end of the seventeenth century, but in the fifty-six generations since the first recorded Potter Coven which had been the coven headed by Dirgard Potter who died in 715, including that coven and Harry's there had only been twelve. The last before Harry had been

that of Duke James III who died in 1670. And with the exceptions of the prior three generations of Potters, no Potter had fewer than four women bound to him by love either as Consort or Love Bound Concubine in the mature form of that bond. Likewise, it seemed that where the Lord had a Wife at Law as opposed to a Consort, there had been no coven regardless of how many love bound concubines he had.

Connie explained that Covens required a certain number of magical love bonds to form. They did not know for certain how many, although it seemed that seven witches bound to their husband and in a way to each other certainly was sufficient. It was highly unlikely if not practically impossible for a wizard even in eastern cultures to find himself with seven true Consorts, although this would probably trigger a coven. It was far easier, assuming it happened, for a coven to form with seven witches initially bound as Concubines. But those witches had to be beyond the submissive, slave-like state of the initial bond. As a Concubine, their bond to their wizard had to be all but indistinguishable from that of a Consort. This meant they needed to choose the next stage - the Love Bond - both of their own free will and because they did in fact love their Binder to some degree. Furthermore, they all had to be free to bear their "husband's" children. While it did not seem necessary that all needed to become pregnant for the Coven to form, and in fact that had not been the case, there could be no real restrictions on any "wife" in that regard. One might argue there were some. Astoria and the younger girls would not be allowed permission until they were a little older, but once they achieved such age, they only had to ask. At that time, Harry could neither stop them from having his child nor make them do so. The rule in Harry's family was that no woman would be treated differently than any other and only their extreme youth would be used as a basis to deny them permission to become pregnant and therefore complete the bond. As this restriction was not absolute, it meant that there were no true distinctions between the bonds which was apparently a key component of forming a Coven. In Harry's family, the original "bar" to permission had been attaining ones OWLs. When Luna had bound as a Consort, the bar changed to being at least fifteen years of age. When Ginny received permissions, it had lowered again to age fourteen years and eleven months. This applied to everyone, although it was agreed that being of Bonding Age was also necessary

as Gabrielle was Veela and she might not be of bonding age by that time. In her case, it was the latter of her calendar age or attaining bonding age and after that, all bets were off for she could, if she wanted, get pregnant immediately thereafter but that was still years away. The other houses had their own age restrictions. Remus and Frank had set theirs at age sixteen but as all of their girls were at least that old, it was no restriction at all. Fred, George and Bill had set theirs at age fifteen, although so far none under the age of sixteen had asked so far as Connie knew. Neville's was age sixteen or completion of their OWLs, whichever came first, although thus far that restriction only applied to Pattie Abbott and Natalie McDonald. What was also apparently critical was that while the wizard could withhold permission to bear a child to the young witch, once she achieved the set age, permission would not be withheld. This meant that insofar as having children were concerned, there was in fact little or no distinction between the Consorts and Concubines. The only real difference was the initial bond, not the final one.

There were some differences, although those were legal ones and not magical ones. The Consorts in House Potter were by law the Duchess and Countess and should they bear a son, that son would be heir to those titles. But in all houses, should the Consort fail to bear a son, the oldest son by any of the other wives would be heir in both magic and law. Again, this meant there was little difference between the wives. It was the nature of these very similar bonds and their number that triggered a Coven apparently and once that status was obtained, all other witches bound to the wizard would be drawn in and would bring their bonds to full fruition sooner rather than later. This meant that once a Coven was achieved a new Concubine would Love Bond in short order and probably have a child within a year of being so bound or achieving her child bearing age. It also meant that it was no longer an absolute necessity for a new witch to be either a Consort or Concubine to become a member of the Coven and wife of the wizard. She still would have to choose to become a part of the group and would have to accept the life, to include the intimacy and childbearing, but so long as all the members of the Coven agreed to her inclusion - including the wizard - that and "getting busy" with her new wizard and husband was all that was necessary. That was how Cissy had joined "Harry's Harem" and it would also be the way that Gabrielle would when she was older. They were neither Consorts nor



Concubines, but in the eyes of magic they would be equal to their sisters in all things magical.

A Coven, Connie said, was a magical collective. The wizard was the initial focal point of the magical bonds and all of the witches initially bonded to him. Once a Coven was achieved, the bonds would extend to and between all members of the Coven. The practical effect of this bond seemed to be an increase in everyone's magical abilities over time. In essence, if any member of the bond knew or learned some kind of expressive magic, all the others would learn it very quickly. With Harry and the other Covens this was how they tested for Coven formation. One member knew a difficult spell that few if any of the others knew and the other members were asked to try the spell. In the case of Harry, this was the Patronus Charm. They were all merely told how to cast one and because Harry had been casting a very powerful one since he was thirteen, that was all that had been necessary. Every witch bonded to Harry regardless of age was able to cast that difficult spell on her first try. They also believed this would work for Animagus transformation, as Minerva had mastered that and might work for certain magical languages such as Harry's ability to talk to dragons and in time Gabrielle's ability to communicate with hippogriffs. They also knew from the journals that the magic became a collective magic. This meant that any member of the Coven could draw upon the magical reserves of all the other members if needed, and with twenty-five witches, this meant that it was unlikely any one of them could realistically cast spell to exhaustion, among other things. Covens tended to live longer than average and usually had healthy and magically powerful children.

Tatiana asked then why were they frowned upon. Connie said that while the real benefits far outweighed and potential drawbacks, in the male oriented and Pureblood societies in Europe, because the bond did not distinguish between wizard or witch or blood status, it was deemed "unhealthy." She explained that within the Coven the wizard was one of many, not a true domineering head of the Coven. Moreover, since most Concubines were Muggle Born and you could not pick a consort based upon blood status, this meant there was no way a Coven could truly be considered Pureblood. Consorts formed by love and with compatible magics, not by blood status. And once a Coven formed, the wizard's ability to have intimate relations with a

woman became restricted to his bond mates. He could not function in that regard outside of the bond. There was also the fact that Covens tended to have large families and not just because of the number of wives. Most magical families were small, few had more than three children and the average was less than two. In all probability, Harry would average somewhere between three and four children per wife, maybe even more. Only his two oldest might have fewer than four when all was said and done. The bond drove the bonded to procreate in a manner of speaking. This created issues regarding inheritances. However, given Harry's estate, he could support a hundred children or more and provide for them and their children without breaking his bank.

Then, of course, there was the issues of intimacy. Both the magical and muggle cultures might take issue with this aspect of the bond. The bond all but compelled the wizard to be intimate with all his wives as often as possible but not to such an extent that he could not do anything else with his life. This aspect of the bond could be dealt with through scheduling and other means such that each wife could expect her husband to be with her at least a few times every week. But even with as few as seven wives, being with each every day might not be feasible. Connie said that once the bond formed, and it formed in Harry's case before she was bonded to him, the bond forms between all. This meant that the witches no longer distinguished between intimacy with their wizard or their other bondmates. As soon as she Love Bonded to Harry and even though she had not been into Girl Sex before, if Harry was unavailable, she would be intimate with any of her sister wives and that meant that if she was not sleeping with Harry, she was sleeping with one of his other girls. This seemed to be unrelated to the fact that she was a magically adolescent witch. Three of Harry's witches were magically mature and from that standpoint did not need sexual release to help stabilize their magic. All three had never been intimate with another witch before in their lives and one had already had a child which was also believed to curb that need, and yet every witch now was intimate with anyone else in the bond. They were drawn to each other that way and, for the new witches, this meant they would have sex with all their sisters within their first few days after their bonding. After that, she said each of the witches was probably intimate in that way at least two or three times a day, even if they were also with Harry on

that day assuming their schedules allowed them that. The odd thing was, the bond alone seemed to go a long way towards stabilizing their magic, but it also drew them together that way anyway. While the bond seemed to prefer sex with their wizard, meaning none of them were truly playing for the other team, it also seemed to draw the witches together with each other as well. In the course of a month, and assuming the schedules allowed - after all they were all very busy without regard to sex - she could expect to sleep with Harry four times, have sex with him at least fifteen other times, sleep with all the other witches in the Coven at least once and have sex with all of them several times as well and they could expect the same as well. Many might find this disturbing and, truth be told, she would have as well before this. But the benefits - and this meant far more than the sex - made it all worth it in her opinion and Connie was certain the other members of her Coven would agree. In fact, the situation was similar in all of the five active Covens that were here.

"So," Tatiana said, "should my Charlie bond with those other witches it will be the same for me?"

"Not until and unless you become a Coven. Until that bond forms, you will not feel any new attraction to his other bondmates or desire to be with them as well. Once that bond forms, you will find you don't really distinguish between being intimate with your wizard or one of your Bond Sisters. It all becomes almost one and the same. True, we'd all rather be with our wizard all the time, but we can't and we think this is a way the bond compensates for that and strengthens our relationships with all of the Coven. Don't get me wrong. Aside from that, we are who we were. We still can get upset with each other and into arguments, but the bond allows us to get over it and helps us all work for and contribute to the collective needs of our new family. The bond helps us get along in a situation that without the bond could easily be fraught with petty arguments, jealousy and goodness knows what else. As odd as this is, this might well be a healthier relationship scenario than most, which we think is the point."

"So, social prejudices aside it's just a question of the right number of witches?" Tatiana asked after a moment of thought.

"If it was that simple there might well be several Covens out there but there are not," Connie said. "People can be selfish and women can be catty with each other. Coven's are about subordinating yourself to the family. That's not to say we can't aspire to greater things. We can have careers and that, but our ambitions cannot spill over into the family. By the nature of the bonds, I can aspire to be anything except the Duchess or Countess and my children, while they would be in the lines of succession, cannot truly dream of one day becoming the Duke or Count. Harry's heirs will be either the oldest sons of his Consorts or, should they only bear daughters, the first born son of the affiliated Concubine. In my case, that means my son, should I have one, might be the next Lord Black and Count of Darby, but that assumes that Luna has no sons and my son is born first. Given that Mallory is expecting a boy and due in late March and I'm not even pregnant yet, it's fair to say I have to accept that if I have a boy, he won't be the next Count. The bond keeps me from trying to change things in favor of my children and at the expense of Harry's other children. The biggest problem with conventional Harems is the intrigue as the wives jockey for position for themselves and their children. That does not exist in a Coven. But, until the Coven forms, selfishness can still exist and it can prevent the Coven from forming."

"Oh?"

"I'll begin with the Consorts. In almost every case we are aware of, the Coven has a Consort. Whether she was the first to bon with the wizard or not is not relevant. First thing is this: fewer than one in four marriages in the magical world are by Consort Bond. So the first hurdle to clear is this rare bond. Without it there cannot be a Coven regardless of any other factors. With it - well until the bond forms, a Consort has a large degree of control over things. Her husband cannot acquire more witches or Love Bond with them without the Consort's consent. And one might say most witches are not truly disposed to sharing their wizards at all. So you need a witch whose magic can bind naturally to a wizard such that the Consort Bond takes hold and that witch must be inclined to allow other witches to join the family as near equals. Arguably, this is far easier said than done."

"Next there are the Concubines themselves. Six need to Love Bond with their wizard and accept their roles in the Coven to be of their own free will. Arguably, witches are not likely to do this. With very few exceptions, if you are to become a Concubine, you become one before you're seventeen. Muggle Borns like me are never told this fate is even possible. Those magically raised girls who are fear it and hope it will not come to pass. For all of us, whether we knew this could happen or not, it can easily be seen as rape. We are taken from our homes and lives without warning and forced by the forming bond to do what our wizard commands and the bonding - as you are aware - is sexual. It is similar to the bonding rite for a Consort except we don't choose it, it's forced upon us. Most of us wind up as little more than slaves and sex slaves at that. While the initial bond keeps us from running away or defying our wizard, deep inside we are still who we were and often come to loath the wizard who did this to us. Even if the wizard bound us with the intention of allowing us one day to Love Bond with him and be his wife in all but law, it can take us years to reach the point where we will take that chance and develop the feelings for him necessary to move beyond that initial bond. 'Used' Concubines tend to be more willing to take that leap of faith but even then they tend to be reticent to do so given their experiences."

"And yet it seems to be common here," Tatiana said.

Connie shrugged. "It was arguably easier for me. I knew Harry from before even if I had been obliviated for it and by the time I arrived, I was joining an existing Coven. Years ago, Harry and I were close friends. That and the existing Coven bond makes the transition easy. The first six in each House was something else. Well, it depended upon the family. My family had three 'used' Concubines who readily accepted the bond and two new ones who knew right off that they had been lucky. House Longbottom became a Coven by virtue of the fact that all of the first six Concubines were not first timers. Fred and George Weasley each had two Concubines before they had their Consorts and four of the next five Concubines had prior - er - experience. The hardest lot was Bill Weasley as only four of his had been priors. Still, it seemed to fall together quickly. From almost the beginning, all of us were 'indoctrinated' as in told what was going on and why and encouraged to accept this and not fight it. We all spent hours talking with our soon to be sisters about all this before we even

had to bond. It made it much easier in the end as we knew what could have happened to us and how this fate was and could be far better than we could possibly imagine and - so far - we've not found any reason to doubt that at all!

"Then there was the use of bonding places..."

"Bonding places?" Tatiana asked.

Connie nodded. "Ideally, you use the same place for all of the bondings. It's not always practical. In my case and the case of all my Bond Sisters, it was a bench in the library of Potter Manor. It's where Harry and Hermione bonded and where all of us later bonded to Harry and, as we only recently learned, it was the place where over forty witches bonded to House Potter including Harry's parents and then some. You, of course, did not bond with your husband here. Neither did many of the others. But they all found a place that reminded them of their first bonding place and rebounded there and then consummated all their subsequent bondings there. It gives one like me a sense of connection to the whole. Moreover, the bondings seem to leave a magical trace in time. You can feel how special the place is in that way and it makes it easier. True, many of the 'families' did not begin bonding here. But they all found their own special place. Most often it's a bed or couch or some such and the Consort and her husband make love there to start off and then he bonds with his new witches there seemingly imbuing that bed or couch with powerful magic that helps us accept the bonds. House Longbottom chose a large oak tree by a lake not far from here which reminded Lord Longbottom of a similar place at the Longbottom Estate in Britain where now ten generations of Longbottoms bound to their Consorts and Concubines. A bonding place is powerful magic and arguably is as important as anything else in helping that family to become a Coven..."

It would turn out that Charlie and Tatiana would find their own bonding place and it would be remarked that it was so them. They would find it the next morning, searching for a place like where they had bonded back in Romania - a small clearing in the woods. They found it and decided to "consecrate" it by making love on the ground as they had when they first bonded. As they did, a dragon landed.

She was a juvenile female Hungarian Horntail and this was her place. But she tolerated the humans as they were not trying to take over and when the humans were done mating, she shuffled over and placed a wing over them as a blanket or tent, depending upon one's point of view, and protected them. Charlie and Tatiana would call her Dolly in part because it seemed right and later, as Charlie and Tatiana accepted more witches into their family over the next two weeks, they would return to that clearing for the bondings and Dolly would be there to protect them from whatever.

In many ways, Dolly was the reason why Charlie and Tatiana were in Charenwell. Charlie had returned to Romania just after the First Task of the Tri-Wizard Tournament with one very pissed off Horntail Queen in tow. She had decided then and there to take her clan away and destroy the humans who had done that to her. Dolly was her granddaughter and was then but a hatchling. She stayed from her mother's nest and got lost. She was found by Charlie and Tatiana and they did not behave like the other humans. The others would have put her out of her misery as it were to harvest her. Charlie and Tatiana nursed her back to health, as Dolly was half starved when they found her, and then searched for her mother and clutch so as to return her. Dolly was reunited with her mother and family and it was this act that arguably saved Charlie and Tatiana's lives when the Horntails revolted. Later, Charlie and Tatiana would learn that Dragons honored life debts even more so than wizards. When they arrived in Charenwell, Dolly was assigned to them by the Horntail Queen and clan. She would live close to them and be their protector and guardian and, in time, a part of their family as well.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11th, 1996 – Angelo's Seafood Café, Pottersport, Carenwell.

There were, in fact, two Harry Potters out and about this day. The first version was the one who took his ladies and guests to Martha's. That version was the one who gave the last of his ladies their jewels and applauded as they put their black collars on and was snogged senseless when he placed their "engagement" and "wedding" rings on their left ring fingers. That first version was also the one who had to explain to Gabrielle why she did not get her collar and why her necklaces were different from the others. Gabrielle was only nine,

although she would say she was almost ten. Gabrielle's mother had made it clear. While she had chosen Harry as her life mate and Harry had accepted, she was still not fully bound to him as a wife and even though she would live with Harry and his family, until she was bound to Harry permanently, she was still Appoline's daughter and would mind her mother and Harry and the others would do so as well. She received nice things, but they were age appropriate, aside from the last thing Harry gave her which was her "engagement" ring and it was just like the others. This mollified her as she had been upset about the different necklaces and the fact she received no earrings at all. Her mother made it clear she was too young for pierced ears. The first Harry told her that once she was old enough, she would get her "family" necklaces and all of that. Until then, she had to accept the solitaire diamond necklace for formal occasions and the gold necklace with her initials for other occasions. The ring placated her. It was first Harry who had also agreed that Gabrielle return to France for a few days to sort through her things and decide what she would bring with her to Charenwell and to spend days in the Magical shops of Paris with her mother to help furnish her future apartment, expand her wardrobe and buy her first wand. She would return the following weekend, although she seemed like she didn't really want to go.

First Harry was also the one who attended Ginny's Birthday Party which began not long after they returned from Martha's. All his wives were there as were all the Weasleys and Neville and his family as well. Ginny was showered with gifts, although most were for her new apartment which she would move into in about a month. As she was just turning fifteen, Harry could not buy her a car, but he did buy her a Firebolt racing broom and some more jewelry which really made her ecstatic. First Harry took Ginny out for a romantic, candle lit dinner and dancing and then took her into his bed. It was her first time being with just him and she clearly enjoyed it. She told him the only way her birthday could be more perfect was if she learned she was pregnant the next morning.

Second Harry sat at the table in Pottersport. He was meeting several people for lunch and knew he would spend his second Sunday night with two of his witches, but that was for later. Second Harry was responding to a call from Dudley about something important and something about "family." It couldn't be about Dudley's engagement



to Clara as that had already occurred. So as he sat looking over the harbor, he could not help but wonder what this was about.

"Hey Harry," a voice began. Harry looked up and saw his younger sister Clarice.

"Clarice?" he asked. "Um - well don't take this wrong but why...?"

"I'd ask you the same thing," Clarice said. "Isn't today one of your - erm - wives birthdays? You might not be much of a brother but you should at least try and be a husband!"

"I'm there," Harry said. "As we speak, I'm there and later tonight we will have a wonderful Birthday date. She debated about that, wanted an ... well something else. But she hasn't had an alone date with me so..."

"How can you be here and there?"

Harry then explained his Time Turner.

"Well that explains a lot," Clarice said. "Read the papers and you seem to be all over the place and it made no sense until now."

Harry shrugged. "It became necessary on many levels," he said.

"I'm sure it did," Clarice replied. "And yet I never see you..."

"Clarice," Harry began, "I didn't want to ... you have a nice family and all and I didn't want to take over or something."

"Well it's not like I'm queuing up to be a part of your - erm - harem or whatever it is. Not about to do that 'cause you're my brother even if we didn't know until recently," she chuckled.

"I agree that's a bit off," Harry said. "Still..."

"I appreciate that you're not trying to do the 'Big Brother' thing on me and all, but we are brother and sister even if we only learned that

recently. You are my brother and, had things been different, we would have grown up together..."

"And probably gotten on each other's nerves," Harry added.

Clarice chuckled. "Probably. But we are still family. I admit, I haven't met our Aunt and Uncle yet, but I've met Dudley and he seems nice enough."

"He's changed," Harry said. "He used to be the biggest berk in existence..."

"Not talking 'bout me, are you?" a voice said. Harry looked up and saw Dudley, Clara and his Aunt Petunia except his Aunt looked different in a way. It seemed her usual expression when seeing Harry had been replaced. The woman looked sad in a way he had never seen before. The three new arrivals sat at the table.

"Sorry, Dud, but..." Harry began.

"Trying to corrupt your sister and my Cousin into thinking ill of me?" Dudley began to tease. "Then again, you did use the past tense and in that way you're right about me. I was one."

"Clara," Harry said, "it's good to see you again. Did I congratulate you two on your engagement? If I didn't, I meant to."

"You did last time we met, thank you," Clara said.

"I kinda wished I was there when Dudley proposed, seeing as he did it in front of a whole restaurant..."

"He proposed to me at the restaurant," Clara said, "but that was pretty private ... until I said yes then he announced it to the world as it were," she added with a blush. "It was quite sweet."

"S-sister?" Petunia stuttered somewhat out of the blue.

"Mum, let me introduce Clarice here," Dudley said indicating Clarice. "She's Harry's younger sister."

"Younger sister?"

"Clarice?" Dudley continued. "This is my Mum, Petunia. She was your Mum's older sister and is your Aunt I suppose."

"Pleasure to meet you," Clarice said. "I'll admit I knew none of this before this summer. I knew I was adopted and all, but nothing about my real family. Then Harry shows up and later Dudley and..."

"I never knew!" Petunia said crying. "I never knew!"

"Okay..." Harry began slowly, "what's going on and why are we here?"

"Dad had a heart attack the other day," Dudley said. "He's in the hospital. I admit all things considered that's hardly a surprise. What was is what we found out after."

"And what was that?" Harry asked.

"Mum and Dad were suffering from the long term effects of potions abuse and memory charms," Dudley said.

"WHAT?"

"It was the reason why a lot of things have happened," Petunia said. "Most of your life, Harry, has been a lie - a potions induced lie!"

"I - I don't understand!"

"Growing up, your mother was my best friend. I was her big sister and we both found each other annoying at times, but that's to be expected I suppose. I always knew she was special and wonderful and smart and probably prettier than I was and that didn't bother me too much, so long as she was my sister and friend. There weren't a lot of kids nearby where we lived our own age and most of them were either boys or really annoying. We had cousins, but they were all way older than us, so for a long time it was just the two of us. True, when we went off to school we had our own friends there, although Lily not so

much for some reason, but none were as important to us as each other.

"I was around six when I realized your mother was magical. Of course, I had no idea that's what was really happening, but I knew she was different in an extraordinary way and it was a wonderful kind of different. Deep down, though, I was afraid for her. I was afraid if anyone outside our family found out about her special talents they'd take her away from us forever. I had nightmares about that.

"When Lily was nine and I was eleven, Lily met a boy her own age near where we lived. He had a funny name. His first name was after a particularly nasty Roman Emperor Septimius Severus, although he only used the last name as his first name. He had another last name..."

"Snape?"

"You know him?"

Harry nodded. "Apparently. Severus Snape was my Potions professor at Hogwarts, a real nasty git."

"He was nasty then too, at least when it came to me and my family. The boy wore the worst sort of clothes and looked not unlike a street person, but he was an arrogant ass. His father was a Muggle and it was clear he had no use for Muggles. I didn't like him at all, but Lily was another matter. For her, it was her first real friend aside from me and he was the one who told her what her gift was, although in his mind this made her superior to others and me inferior.

"When Lily was eleven, she got her Hogwarts letter. We were all proud of her as by then we knew she was a witch and Hogwarts was considered the best magical school in Britain. But for me it was also my nightmare come true. They found out about my Lily's gift and were taking her away from me!" Petunia sobbed. "She was going away and I couldn't be with her! Oh I tried! I wrote to that school of yours begging to come with her. I had to! She was my friend and I was her big sister and I had to look out for her, but that Dumbledore chap told me it was impossible. I was crushed when she left. But she

kept her promise. I got at least one letter a week from her and usually more for a time.

"As the years passed, her letters became fewer and farther between. When she came home at first, she was all excited about her school and what she was learning. I don't think that truly changed, but as time went on she was less and less willing to say things. She never told us much about the war in your world at the time or about how it affected her and all of that. But as time went along, she seemed to drift further and further away and that hurt! My parents told me it was a part of growing up, that finding out who you could be could do this. Didn't make it any easier for me.

"I finished school in '76. I had gotten into the scene at the time and it had affected my marks. I didn't have the A Levels to move on to University and was looking for a job. That was the year where Lily took her exams, what would have been her O Levels at the time - they're called something else now. She did really well and ... well she threw it in my face. We had a nasty argument and I most certainly said some hurtful things to her, things I didn't really mean... After that summer, I never saw her again. I invited her to my wedding and she never came. She did not invite me to hers. I only knew about it later when my parents told me and they had been there. Everything I knew about her from then on was from my parents. I learned about your birth from them. Lily never sent me a thing. We were both headstrong and could be very stubborn. But I did want to reconnect with her and apologize and maybe, one day, get my sister back.

"It never happened, of course. I knew about your birth from my parents, but they never saw you as Lily was then off into some kind of hiding. She wrote to them but not to me. My parents died when you were about six months old. It was a car crash that took them. Lily was not at the funeral.

"Then you showed up at our door. Who would do such a thing? It was November 2nd! That wizard just left you on the step like rubbish! You could have died that night and he did not seem to care. Fortunately, the weather was both dry and unseasonably warm for that time of year, but still! Who would do that to a child? The note simply said you were Lily's boy and she and her husband were dead. It said nothing

about a sister or anything else. You were all I had left of my sister and I swore to myself I'd do right by you for her! Vernon had no issues with you. All he wanted is for you to be raised right so that you would not break my heart like Lily did and abandon your family for the magical world.

"We took you in without question. For a time, you and Dudley shared a room and got on famously. Course, the two of you were little hellions. I swear you two were plotting mischief before either of you could truly walk or talk. It was frustrating at times, but you two were so brilliant together we found it hard to stay mad at you mostly. Vernon and I decided to hold off having another child for about a year. I wanted you two out of nappies and somewhat controllable before I brought another child into the house. But that was reasonable, wasn't it?"

"So I wasn't sleeping in the Cupboard?"

"No, Harry. First off that's so wrong. Secondly, you and Dudley threw fits if we separated you two for too long."

"Then what happened?" Harry hissed.

"Dumbledore happened, Harry," Petunia said. "It was about a year and a half after you came to us when he showed up. You and Dudley were best of friends and finally out of your nappies and I was pregnant. He showed up and saw how happy and well adjusted you were and ... and saw to it we ruined your life," Petunia sobbed. "He cast spells on Vernon and me and forced us to take potions! Every month a new box would arrive with two more vials with a letter that told me to cut your hair, place a strand in each vial and then for Vernon and me to take it that night. It made us hate you. It made us see your magic as a threat but also prevented us from getting rid of you. Before then we didn't hate you, Harry. You were just a little boy and none of this was your fault. Vernon was not comfortable with the magical world - can't blame him as neither was I - but that had nothing to do with you, just the patronizing, condescending bastards we had met who were a part of it.

"He never asked us what we thought. He never told us why he did that to us. He never told us why he ruined all of our lives - and he did! You went through who knows how many years not knowing love or affection. That would not have happened! Dudley became a spoiled brat and damn near ruined his life..."

"I wasn't potioned up," Dudley said. "I was too young to know better and Mum and Dad encouraged me to be a berk. Would still be one had it not been for the dementors last summer."

"What you saw of Vernon and me, what you remember was not us - or at least not how we were meant to be. The potion exaggerated all of our less desirable traits and turned us into what you remember. Vernon was always big, but never a bully. That was his older sister Marge who before the potions neither he nor I could stand. I was smart and ambitious for myself and wanted to try for a degree. Our best traits were suppressed and our worst were all you could see. And worse..." she sobbed, "... those potions took away my baby! I was pregnant and lost our baby and ... and we couldn't have another one! Why did he do that to us, Harry? Why did he ruin all of our lives? Why did he always threaten to kill us if it looked like we were breaking free of his plans?"

"Kill you?"

"That howler thingie last year when Vernon and I were going to kick you out for what happened to Dudley with the Dementors?"

Harry nodded remembering.

"The one thing we were allowed to remember from that day when he ruined our lives was his threat: if we ever betrayed him or ever let you out from our control to anyone other than him, he'd see to it we and Dudley died."

"From what I've been learning over the last couple of months that sounds just like him. Won't do the dirty work himself, but he's more than willing to see it done when he deems it necessary," Harry growled. "The bugger's a coward! All about mercy and redemption so long as merciful are on his orders and the redeemed are devoted to

him. Otherwise, he won't lift a finger to do what's necessary, will he? I had to kill when I was only eleven! I found myself in life or death struggles against vicious murders, Dark Wizards and foul beasts every year since I came into this world! But he's more than willing to let people die if it's for his Greater Good. He's more than willing to allow a threat to be eliminated so long as his hands are clean! I'm not a fan of killing people. I've seen far too much death and lost friends in this war. But war is about killing and if your not willing to do it yourself, you have no business allowing it to be done!

"Dumbledore is a Magical Elitist from a long line of them going back centuries. Oh sure, they have no problem with Muggle Borns like my Mum. They have no problem with marrying them from time to time or selling them off as slaves. They talk about equality and tolerance in all the right places and with all the right words, but do they mean it? Dumbledore wants to rule or, if he can't, control the ones who do and see to it his world view becomes the only world view. But he's a political animal and not a revolutionary so he moves as a politician might and not a subversive. He moves in back rooms and with intrigue, guile and manipulations. A subversive - like Voldemort - moves with bombs and such. They both, however, believe that the ends justify their means.

"My family - the Potters - have been the bane of Dumbledore's family for at least a thousand years. We were land wealthy - and still are - and they land poor. We were nobles, Peers of the Realm - and still are - and they were and are commoners. We've supported the Crown and they tried to subvert it and they had always lost when they pushed too hard!

"The devil has been in the details, but that man's plan has always been to destroy House Potter! I can't say for certain what those details were or are, only guess. But Mum and Dad would have been far safer here than in Britain back then and yet he somehow convinced them to stay there. We think he allowed the attack to occur and I think he hoped I'd snuff it. We're certain he did not know about Clarice, otherwise she'd been a target as well..."

"Why didn't he kill us after?" Clarice asked.



"He doesn't work that way. After I was famous just for surviving and you were at least a rumor. He couldn't kill us then - not directly at least. But he could make sure we'd never learn about who we really are and where we really came from. He made sure by sending me to Petunia here hoping she so hated magic as to keep me down and ignorant. He made sure with you by setting you up for adoption only to sell you as a Concubine later when it suited his purposes. Had he done that, you'd be stripped of any rights as a Potter. In my case, it seems he wanted me pliable, which could not happen if I came to Hogwarts with self-esteem and a backbone. He wanted to be my father figure so I would look up to him and follow him blindly, probably to my ultimate death and to the end of our House. If that was his only goal - ending House Potter - he should've snuffed us. I think he wanted more. I think he wanted control of House Potter, to mold it into a new House Dumbledore to carry on his view of the world as a new dynasty. If I didn't fit the bill, he's turn me into his little attack dog and, it seems, once I sired a son by what he deemed as a trustworthy family, he'd have turned me loose on Voldemort, without training or real hope of success. That son would be raised as ignorant of his true heritage and responsibility as I was, but also raised to believe in Dumbledore's Greater Good and therefore to advance that agenda. I don't think it was until later that he knew about Charenwell, but we're fairly certain he learned about my connection to this Country before I went off to Hogwarts."

"How?" Petunia asked.

"My grandfather the last Duke and later the Lord Mayor were making demands for my repatriation practically from the start. Dumbledore claimed that as I was not born here and as I was born in Magical Britain, I was their subject and therefore under their authority. As he had practical control of their courts and legislature and as he had indirect control over the Ministry, Charenwell hit a brick wall as it were. Legally, it seems, the bastard had a point. That he had sealed my parents' Will such that their wishes could not become part of the picture proves his plot against me. But with the Will sealed, there was no way to prove it.

"My grandfather and grandmother died eight years ago or so, but the Lord Mayor's Office continued to demand my repatriation. The

demands were more insistent when I entered Hogwarts in 1991. Until then, they had no idea where I was. But again, they were ignored. There were many attempts to get me and bring me back. The problem was that what few wards Dumbledore placed on Privet Drive, they were enough that no one but him or those he truly trusted could find it. Those wards covered me for days even if I was somewhere else. When I entered Hogwarts - well, I was inaccessible there as well and when I went to the Weasleys and such, I entered under another set of Dumbledore wards and, more importantly, under the eyes of one of his most loyal followers. It wasn't until this summer that the Old Man bollixed it. This summer, he set a watch on Privet Drive and selected people who knew about Charenwell and my situation and could get me out. My Godfather, who died before I came back from school, recommended the watch and even the watch standers and Dumbledore took that advice. I was brought here in the middle of that first night and a ruse was then in place to keep him out of the picture as long as possible. Course it helped he was out of the country..."

"Bloody hell," Dudley began, "it all sounds like James Bond shit!"

"Dudley!" Petunia and Clara protested.

"Sorry," he replied sheepishly.

"Dud's got a point," Harry said.

Petunia then said what had been bothering her for minutes or more. "Y-you killed someone?"

Harry nodded. "At least four people personally. One was in self defense. He would have killed me if I hadn't killed him and truthfully, I really don't remember his death at all. I passed out before he died. The other three were last week. One had planned their failed invasion and double-cross and the other two were marked Death Eaters. Shot the two in the back of the head and emptied the rest on the planner."

"Harry!" Petunia started.

"Mum?" Dudley interjected, "it might not be declared yet and we might not be ready, but we are at war. I didn't sign up for the Army

here to sit in barracks and march around a field. Charenwell is at war."

Petunia looked at Harry and he nodded. "Aside from limited things, we're not ready to fight yet," he said. "But we are at war with Magical Britain. We're beginning the evacuation of those most at risk from their civil war - the Muggle Borns and their families. Her Majesty's government has asked us to prepare to intervene and we are doing that. The British Magicals have attacked us and insulted us in manners which justify forceful action and we are preparing to show them they picked on the wrong people! When we are ready, they will learn their lesson and if we are ready, that lesson will be permanent!"

"I never wanted this for you," Petunia began.

"Who would?" Harry replied. "By history and all rights I should be in my sixties or older before I have to deal with this. I'm the youngest Duke and Lord in history. The next youngest was almost twice my age and I had to become Duke at this time! The country does not need a new Duke and a teenaged one at that! It needs experience and all that, but here we are."

"I'm sorry, Harry," Petunia said.

Harry shrugged.

"No! I mean it! I'm sorry for all of this. I never wished this for you..."

"What sane person would?"

"Forgive me?"

Harry looked at Petunia. "Intellectually, given what I've learned, I can. I can forgive you and even Uncle Vernon. Emotionally? I'm not there yet. It may take a long time."

Petunia hung her head. "I hoped for better. Truthfully, I expected less."

They would spend the rest of the afternoon on less weighty subjects; particularly the subject of Harry's new family.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR: FAMILIES (PART I)

MONDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1996 - Black House, Charenwell.

If one were to stand at the right place on the pitch and turn and look at Potter Manor, Black House and Longbottom House, they appeared to be very similar in size and design. Neither looked truly larger or smaller than the other and each looked as if it was built to the same design. This had been on purpose. Even though Potter Manor was almost three hundred years older than the two new buildings, Harry had wanted them to look as if they had always been there. Potter Manor stood at the west end of the pitch where the goals would be if this truly was a Quidditch Pitch. Longbottom House and Black House stood on what one might call the sidelines facing each other. The front of Longbtoom House faced north and Black House faced south.

As it turned out, however, while Potter Manor had been an immense place and was still the most historic of the structures, it was now the smaller of the three. Longbottom House was the largest. Originally designed as an "L" shaped structure with the long side facing the pitch and the short side extending from its western side (the side closest to Potter Manor) to the south, when Neville decided to make it the home of his entire clan, he added another wing on the eastern side. An open courtyard and small garden was in the center of the three sides and beyond that a swimming pool. There were to be no formal gardens to the south. The woods remained and paths led to Longbottom Lake, the large car garage which was now House Longbottom's (a new and larger garage had been built to the north for the Potter vehicles), and his collection of new greenhouses.

Black House was a "T" shaped structure. The top of the "T" faced out over the Pitch while its base ran to the north. Not surprisingly, the base was known as the "North Wing" while the front of the House was known as the "Main Wing." Each of the houses was designed to have a certain number of "Ladies Apartments." These were the suite of rooms the various wives could call their own and where they would live with their children one day. Each suite was designed so that it would alone occupy one sixth of the floor in Potter Manor. Each suite had its Lady's Suite which consisted of her large bedchamber, her large walk-in closet, a Dressing Room and a large and elegant

bathroom designed to be comfortable for more than one person in the shower or bath, and attached to it as well were two additional rooms. One was to be her study and the other a nursery or spare room. Next to the suite were two additional, large bedrooms with their own closet and baths for the older children. Three children could easily occupy these rooms with their own beds, dressers, writing tables or vanities without difficulty. Beyond those rooms were the Lady's private kitchen, immediate family dining room and large family sitting room. The Lady's Suite, her future children's rooms and their family space all opened onto a central corridor most often shared with the Lady across the hall if it did not actually open into a common area for all the residents of the floor.

In Longbottom House there were ten such apartments on the First, Second and Third Floors as well as a separate "Master's Suite on the First and Third Floors. Even with so many apartments, there was still a large amount of common spaces available to all the residents on those floors as well as the Ground Floor itself. The modifications to Longbottom House adding the additional wing had been made practically the day Frank and Alice agreed to take on additional Concubines - their first additional ones. There were, at that time only five who were anticipated, but both Frank and Alice believed there might well be additional ones as they were by then aware that Harry was attempting to repatriate the missing Charenwell girls so they had four more apartments than they had ladies to occupy them. The problem was that this left them five apartments short of their new needs. These five would be built on the Fourth Floor beginning the coming week.

In Black House, there were six such apartments on the Second and Third Floors. The Second Floor included a small suite for Harry; small as compared to his suite of rooms in Potter House at least. Again, each floor also had its common areas for the residents. The First Floor only had four such apartments. The North Wing was now the Ducal Offices containing offices for Harry, his personal assistant, his Consorts and their Attendants and, for now Dora (as Head of Security) and Minerva for her work with the Educational Development Board. There were two conference rooms and several unused offices. The Ground Floor of the Main Wing included public rooms. This included the "Briefing Room" which was already in use, a large

dinning room on the eastern end of the House, various sitting rooms for entertaining, a large recreation room similar to the one in Potter Manor, a children's library and three additional rooms for the children's use later. The Ground Floor of the North Wing was the "infirmary," which was actually more like a health clinic with a ten bed ward.

While the two new Houses were finished (mostly) and ready for their new occupants, the problem was furniture, or rather a lack of it. This affected both Houses, although House Longbottom far less so as the full contents of House Longbottom and Susan's family estates had already been transferred to Charenwell. For Harry, however, if it was not already in Potter Manor, he had to buy it or acquire it somehow and, while there were furniture stores in Charenwell and a few furniture makers as well, the needs far outstripped the local supply. Most would have to be imported from overseas. The "quick fix," and one which proved acceptable to his ladies, had been to "raid" his unused guest homes which were well appointed. This would allow sixteen of his ladies to furnish at least their bedrooms and provide for common furnishings, but that was about it especially as some of his surplus furnishings would also be heading to House Longbottom as he was ten bedrooms short - not including the five new ones that were still to be built. There was already a lot on order, but it could take up to a month for delivery. Still, given that and the furnishings on the Second and Third Floor of Potter Manor, it was enough to allow those floors to be vacated so that they could be renovated.

When pondering this issue about a month earlier, Harry had made the "mistake" of asking why couldn't they just transfigure stuff into furniture. It was a mistake because one of his wives was Minerva who held a Transfiguration Mastery and had taught the subject for forty years and two - Hermione and Daphne - had been at the top of their class in the subject. For O.W.L.s, Harry learned, they were taught the basic theory of magic. At N.E.W.T. Levels and beyond, you learned the details of the theory and naturally Hermione and Daphne had read ahead. Despite appearances, transfiguration does not really change something into something else, at least not permanently. It can never truly change the nature of an object which was why you could not transfigure a table into a real pig, for example. Sure, you could turn it into something that looked like a pig, but it would be an

inanimate object and not a living pig. This was why you could not simply transfigure stuff into food. If you turned a rock into an apple, it might look, feel and smell like one, but it was still in essence a rock and would be just as nutritional and tasty and, if the spell faded before you could pass it, you would wind up with a belly full of rock chunks. If transfiguration really could change the nature of an object permanently, wizards would have no need for real food or gold or jobs. In most cases, transfiguration was temporary, detectable by those who knew how - and even Muggles, at least those who dealt with gold had been able to detect fake gold for over two thousand years without magic - and could always be undone by magic. If you transfigured something into a baby's crib, the spell could be undone by accidental magic.

One of the fundamental laws of Transfiguration was conservation of mass and nature. If you conserve the mass and nature of the original object - say a one ounce piece of gold - and transfigure it into something of the same mass and nature - say a one ounce gold ring - that change is undetectable, cannot be dispelled and relatively permanent assuming no one came along to transfigure it into something else. The greater the change in nature and mass; the more detectable the transfiguration, the less permanent, and the easier it becomes to dispel. Of course, conservation of mass and nature were only important if you were concerned about permanence. If you were not, Transfiguration was very useful. Minerva's example was a combat one. You could easily pick up a few blades of grass, transfigure them into steel needles, enlarge them into spikes or spears and banish them at an opponent and if banished with enough force, they would be quite lethal even if they reverted back to blades of grass in a matter of minutes. It was all sufficiently mind numbing yet convincing to Harry that he agreed they would need to purchase new furniture rather than try and cheat around the problem. The rooms would be furnished from his vacant guest houses or even guest rooms until such time as his ladies decided to redecorate with new stuff.

Poppy Pomfrey's real introduction to Charenwell began early on Monday morning as she agreed to assist Mallory in the infirmary with the various examinations that would take place that day.



"Why so early?" Poppy asked.

"Many of our young ladies are in flight training and need to be at the Base at eight," Mallory replied.

"Flight training?"

"For our Air Force," Mallory said. "Those in training spend three hours a day in school for flying learning about airplanes and such and another three hours for actual flying, although their actual time in the air is generally not more than two hours. They return here at two for lunch."

"Rather a late lunch," Poppy said.

"They are allowed to eat sandwiches and fruit and such so long as they're not actually in the planes. It's encouraged as they are more active than they otherwise would be and need the nourishment."

"What about regular school?"

"Hasn't started yet and won't until the week after next. The Basic Levels - the girls in what we knew as First through Third Year are not going to be in Flight Training, so their days might seem normal. Since many of the girls in Intermediate Levels - Fourth and Fifth Year - and NEWT Levels are or will be in the Air Force, their classes will be from three until seven in the evening."

"Only four hours a day? How can they hope to finish on time?"

"Actually, Minerva is confident that those factors alone will be of little or no moment. What may delay their finishing is the War which is coming and children. But all agree that it may delay, not prevent them from finishing school. They are in the Air Force and will be expected to fly and fight and some already have," Mallory added thinking of Luna and two others from the other families who were co-pilots on the recent mission.

Mallory explained that the clinic would serve the entire community of The Manors which would probably number around a thousand within

the next year or so. For now, however, the only open patient files were for the "Seven Families:" Harry's, Neville's, the three Weasley brothers', Frank Longbottom's and Remus Lupin's. All told as of that morning that was seven males and one hundred and three females and that did not include Poppy, Arthur, George or Tatiana who would, in all likelihood become residents of the town as well, nor did it include the ladies who would be joining them over the next two weeks.

"With some exceptions," Mallory began, "our process begins when the young ladies arrive here for their bondings. They get a lecture on what they can expect and hope to achieve from Minerva and some of our other ladies with prior experience as concubines. The goal is to let them know why they are here and to convince them to accept their new lives and allow their bonds to mature as soon as practicable. We have found this process to be very effective and, as of last week, most all of the ladies had taken the Love Bond moving beyond their first stages as Concubines. The few who have not are all thirteen or fourteen years of age and have only just completed their second or third year of school year at school. We expect their reticence is due to their relative immaturity, one which will by nature of the Coven Bond resolve itself fairly soon."

"So it works?"

Mallory nodded. "The young ladies who had been concubines before tend to jump at the chance for any improvement over their former condition. Three of Harry's first seven witches were prior concubines as were eight of his first fourteen. For Neville, his Coven may have formed before he brought in his first –er – beginner concubine as aside from his Consort the rest of his first seven had prior experience as such. For the Weasley brothers, they all have six experienced concubines join them as one of their first eight or nine witches. It may well have sped up the formation of the Covens which, in turn, speeds up the process of joining others to them. Without the Covens, it might have taken months or even years for the new girls to look past what has happened to their lives and see the opportunity this new life presents and make that leap of faith. Now it is at most a matter of days. But the Covens aside, the new girls are eased into this as compared to every other first bonding I've heard about. They enter their bonding understanding what has happened to them, why it

happened, why they are here and not in the living hell most girls wind up in and what this life can mean if they take the step of trying to accept it."

"And why is it the younger ones who are not yet there?"

"Younger and most recent," Mallory said. "The only ones who had not taken the next step as of Saturday all arrived last week. We believe it is due to the natural maturation effect of the Coven magic. The magic begins to affect the new witch the moment she is bonded to her wizard and results in a degree of rapid, emotional maturation. I can't say to what degree or how quickly they go through the process nor can I accurately quantify the degree of maturation. It is safe to say that few thirteen or fourteen year old girls have the emotional maturity to form a true love bond, but many sixteen year olds do. Their degree of maturity can be approximated by adding up the physical ages of all the bonded witches and dividing that number by the number of bonded witches. In this example – assuming it is what has happened and our observations suggests it is - within days of bonding, the younger witches mature to the average emotional age of the Coven. This ranges from about nineteen and a half years for Harry's family, which is why his youngest took the bond that night if not the next day, to sixteen and a quarter years for George's witches which may be why his most recent three and youngest had not taken that step, although I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they have by now."

"And our involvement in this?"

"Minerva gives them their initial talk as it were. It takes about two hours and then they are paired with a witch from their new House, usually a love bonded concubine with previous experience. Then they're brought to me for an initial examination. The first thing I do is take a very basic patient history. I ask them their names, when and where they were born, where they grew up, lived, went to school and so on. This is very basic as I only use it to open their file and identify possible sources for healer and medical records back home. If they're Muggle Borns, I ask to see their NHS card, although many arrive here without them as many seem to be caught still in their night clothes or in some other state of undress, either that or their parents have the cards. Still, with that information, I can send out the requests for their

records or at least copies of them. Requests to St. Mungos, magical schools and such are sent to Britain via Gringotts and Muggle records via the British Embassy in Pottersport. Takes a few weeks in many cases..."

Poppy nodded. "I received many such requests about a month ago, come to think of it."

Mallory nodded. "And I thank you for the copies which are now in the girls' files. I also ask them for any information about their families: who they are, where they live, that sort of thing..."

"Why?"

"We will then seek them out and invite them to move here. Harry and Hermione decided very early on that even if these bondings were necessary in a way, they were not about to break up families which is usually the practice. As far as the wizards are concerned, all their ladies are their wives and that means their families are important as well. I haven't seen or heard from my family since the day I was first bonded over twenty-three years ago. Harry had them tracked down: my parents, my brothers and sister and many nieces and nephews I never knew about much less met." Mallory sniffed. "When I last saw them, my older brother was still in school and my younger sister had not even started magic school yet. Now they all have families and my sister named her oldest after me apparently. They're supposed to be arriving today and..."

"In many ways, becoming a concubine cost me my life and family. Harry's trying to give that back to us not just by allowing us to complete our bond and have his children but also to allow my children to know their grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and so on."

"And what about your siblings spouses' families?"

"The Evacuation, as we are calling it, is voluntary. I'm pretty certain that those families have been contacted but can't say for certain. If they haven't been, they will be and if they choose to accept the invitation to relocate, they will be relocated. The immediate families of the wives will be offered the chance to live nearby in The Manors.

The rest will most likely live in Jamestown on the coast, although it all depends upon where they are placed for employment. Once we have taken that information..."

"Hold on," Poppy said, "that's all the history you take? You don't ask about past treatments and problems?"

"Not in my initial evaluation. The focus of this evaluation is to check them over for conditions that cannot wait a couple of weeks or so for a full blown examination. They will all be scheduled for a full work up, but with five ladies and only one Healer, that would take hours. I schedule them as soon as possible after they are bonded, but right now I'm about two weeks behind the bondings.

"What we'll do today is check them over for injuries, illness and other conditions in need of immediate treatment, especially any conditions that could otherwise affect or delay their bondings. A handful arrived here with some injuries in need of treatment or nutritional issues. Some of the youngest ones who have not yet had the talk about the connection between their sexuality and magical maturation have shown signs of adolescent magical instability which we treat immediately as it's likely they might have an unfortunate bout of accidental magic without such treatment. With the prior service concubines there is the added risk of venereal disease. Haven't had that with any of the first time concubines yet, but I've had to treat sixteen of the priors for it and one other witch."

Poppy nodded. "The topical potion takes at least two hours to have an effect, and the oral one requires a meal before it's effective."

"I get the new ladies around eleven and usually complete my work up by noon when they are sent to lunch. The bondings happen sometime after two at the earliest."

"Have you had any recurrences?"

"No, and yes I do check each of the ladies and their new families to be certain. The infected ladies I see the next day for that purpose and, of course, when they get their full examination. I also check the

others in their families at random beginning a few days later. So far, I've managed to stop that problem in its tracks."

"You said there was one who was not a concubine...?" Poppy began.

"Cissy Black," Mallory nodded. While generally such information was never disclosed by a Healer, this was an exception. The Healer's oath did not apply when discussing a patient's history with another Healer who would also have the person as a patient and that was what was happening here as Poppy was joining The Manors clinic. "She arrived here under the protection of her new Head of House Black. She was in bad shape and had to spend a few days undergoing treatment at Mistress Agnes Hospital in Pottersport for severe injuries resulting from ... her former son and his friends gang raped her. According to Cissy, she had not been sexually active since she learned she was pregnant with that animal."

Poppy nodded. "I am well aware of that boy and Slytherin House. I've had to treat him at least eight times a year for those infections. Then again, he's hardly atypical. I might have one or two cases during the year from the other three houses combined, but in that house it seems to be endemic. The boys are debauched by older girls their first year! Each year of boys has two older girls assigned to them for that purpose! The older girls almost line up for the chance since, once they are assigned to the younger boys that way, no other boy in Slytherin is allowed to be with them. But they are that years' playthings for the rest of their time at school it seems. The other girls? Well, unless they are under some kind of protection, they will wind up servicing all the boys in the house at some point whether they want to or not. This means that those infections cannot truly be stopped as I was not allowed to quarantine and treat the entire House each time I treated one of their members and once one had it, most all would in due course. The only ones who are 'safe' are the few who manage to avoid any form of sexual activity. I keep telling Severus that, but he merely shrugs, takes his weekly treatment and lets things go on as always!"

"Severus?"

"Their Head of House," Poppy growled. "Any time one of the girls in his house gives in, he can be the next in line for her especially if she's attractive it seems. Keeps at least three as his personal pets each year, but will violate others as well. Honestly? In my opinion being a witch in Slytherin without the Protection of a Head of a Noble House or a Betrothal – assuming their betrothed doesn't share – isn't much better than being a concubine in one of the public or private brothels!"

Mallory nodded. She had heard all about the joys of being a witch in Slytherin from Amber, Daphne and Astoria even if those three managed to avoid the fate. During Amber's day, it was not nearly as bad as it was now, but it was still bad. Amber had probably avoided that fate when she had been caught with a Muggle Born boy and sold off the following summer. Astoria was still just young enough to avoid out right predation. Daphne had avoided it through skill and cunning, but would confess that she knew it was only a matter of time for her before she was caught, gang raped, and broken in as a House Whore.

"We're getting three more from that House this week," Mallory sighed.

"Oh? Who?"

"Tracy Davis," Mallory began.

"She was one of Severus's pets this past year, not by choice mind you. She was gang raped her first week back."

"Teresa Murdoch..."

"She was a Third Year," Poppy said. "They usually don't force Third Years."

"And Natasha Adair."

"Second Year. What little decency they have is First and Second Year girls are generally off limits."

"Generally?"

"If she's of bonding age and decides to join in of her own accord..." Poppy shrugged. "As far as I know, those two have not fallen victim in that House yet." After a long and somewhat awkward pause she continued. "And after their initial exams?"

Mallory nodded silently agreeing it was time to get back on track. "I have them scheduled for a full exam as soon as possible after they're bonded. Most will bond the day they arrive, although Frank Longbottom holds his bondings the next morning."

"Any reason for that?"

Mallory nodded. "By accident, custom or tradition or something, for the last several generations the men of House Longbottom bond to their women under an oak tree by a lake – the same oak tree and lake. Although they can't use the place of their ancestors as they are not about to risk returning to Britain for that, they are using a similar spot not far from here and I don't think Frank or his son or their respective families have any inclination of being present for the other family's bondings.

"Anyway, once they finish here I take it as a given they will soon be bonded to their wizard, as they all have been within a day or less. I place their new files on one of these two lower shelves. I use this set of shelves for the witches in the Covens and the other multiple witch families. There are many reasons for this. They are being scheduled differently and they are my primary charges here. But it's also because I and several others are studying these various bonds so keeping their records separate I can track how their bonds affect their health and such more easily. So, once they arrive and have their initial exams, their files begin on one of these two lower shelves. The lowest shelf is for the young ladies under the age of fifteen and the next shelf for those newly bonded fifteen or older."

"Why the separation?" Poppy asked.

"The upper shelf with thirteen files currently are the older women," Mallory said. "They are there because they are all old enough to seek permission to have children but have not asked yet. The lower shelf with twenty-one files are the younger girls. Twenty of them are



physically old enough to bear children having attained bonding age – the other one is not and will not be for some years but is betrothed – but even though physically old enough, the families have decided they should wait until they're at least fifteen. Once they turn fifteen, the decision as to when to seek permission is entirely theirs to make."

"Why fifteen?"

"Originally, it was sixteen or upon completing their O.W.L.s, whichever was first. Then Harry bonded with Luna as Consort. She's only just finished Fourth Year and is fifteen, so it dropped to the summer before Fifth Year, which also explains why Ginny has permission even though she only turned fifteen yesterday. The final reduction to fifteen was more recent once we began to realize that the formation of a Coven results in a previously unexpected emotional maturation for the younger ladies and the realization that with their schedules and what not, they may or may not take their O.W.L.s on time. Depending upon the Coven, you can add about three years to the emotional ages of the younger ladies. While a normal fifteen year old girl is arguably too young to become a mother, the same cannot be said with the same degree of certainty for a girl who's emotional eighteen or nineteen. Of these twenty-one files, only one – that of Astoria Greengrass – will move up a shelf between now and the end of the year.

"The ladies on the two lower shelves are scheduled for an examination once every three months until their status changes. I know that at school you examined all of us about once a month, but since a concubine without permission cannot become pregnant, there's no reason to see them to make sure they take their birth control and one with permission is allowed to become pregnant so again, no reason to see them for that reason.

"Once a lady has permission – and this includes all Consorts and the one lady bound to a Coven by what we know as a Coven bond – their files move up to the next shelf. This means they are actively trying to become pregnant but have not tested positive for pregnancy yet. Currently, we have forty files on that shelf. We test these ladies every week using a Muggle Home Pregnancy Test kit."

"Why," Poppy asked. "And how does it work?"

"The Muggle test can give you a positive result within days of embryo implantation. The lady urinates on the device and it will detect the presence of certain hormones in the urine that are only present if she's pregnant. I prefer to know about their pregnancies as soon as possible as I want them to begin taking precautions immediately and, as you know, the potions to curb morning sickness and other hormonal anomalies are more effective if you begin taking them before you develop the symptoms."

"How accurate are the tests?"

"I've had no false positive tests to date," Mallory said. "I won't rule out a false negative test, but as I test them once a week, if there was one I pick it up the next week."

"Running all those tests..." Poppy began.

"Oh, I don't run them. The girls simply come in first thing in the morning, get their test stick and take it into the loo and pee on it. All I have to do is see the result. If it turns blue, they move up to the next shelf. That's for girls who've tested positive for pregnancy but are not on the next week's schedule for their magical pregnancy exam. This week we have six files on that shelf, all of who passed their pee test last week. The shelf above that are the girls we will be magically testing this morning. There are eight of them and we run the standard set of tests for expectant mothers. As you know, it will tell us what their baby or babies will be – and yes we do have at least three who are already expecting twins – whether they are magical – although that has yet to be an issue – and allows us an approximate due date from which we schedule back their monthly exams. The top shelf with twelve files are those who've already been through the whole process. We have a couple of monthly exams scheduled later this week. I had my first monthly last week..."

"You're...?"

Mallory smiled and nodded. "I'm due to have a boy sometime in late March or early April. As you know, due dates are approximations..."

"Congratulations."

"Thanks. Although the Spring's going to be a busy time for us as it is. There are already twenty-six expectant mothers on these shelves and the twelve of us are expecting fifteen children between us. Harry has four pregnant wives with one expecting twins, three others whose children are known, and two others expecting one of whom we test today and the other families are similar."

"Mistress Mallory?" a voice called. An Elf maiden named Elia stood in the door. Mallory explained that the elf was her assistant and also maintained the records. "The ladies are arriving."

"Thank you, Elia," Mallory said. She then turned to Poppy. "Shall we?"

"When do we tell them the results?" Poppy asked.

"It's become the custom to do so at breakfast as all the families eat breakfast together on Monday mornings."

The breakfast began just before seven in the morning. As most ate, Dora began by announcing the names of the twenty young women who would begin their flight training that morning. This new group included Katie, Karen, Rhonda and Connie from "Harry's Harem" and Miriam, Amanda and Hannah from Neville's family. Then Mallory stood up and the room quieted down.

"House Lupin," she began. "Congratulations to Tara, Ellie and Stephanie!" All three were clearly thrilled but Remus's Consort Stephanie seemed ready to try again right then and there. "The House of Frank Longbottom: congratulations to Sandra, Gretchen and Marie. Our winners from the House of George Weasley are Anna, Isabel and Eileen. For his co-conspirator Fred Weasley they are Vicki, Helen and Coleen. For the more mature Bill Weasley it's Samantha, Donna and Christine. For Neville, our winners are Annette, Deborah and Hannah."

Hannah first through herself at Neville and then at her best friend Susan.

"And finally, for Harry our winners are: Stacey, Karen and..." Mallory paused as those to made sure to kiss Harry and soon everyone could hear Ginny saying: "Please, please, please..."

"...Ginny!"

"Yes!" Ginny squealed. "This was my best birthday ever!" she added as she made sure Harry knew how much she appreciated this surprise present.

"And," Mallory continued, "now I'll leave the best news for the new healer on our clinic staff, Madam Poppy Pomfrey."

Poppy stood up. Those who knew her knew she had a fairly stern external presence but was really a very caring and kind person. Then again, being Healer for a school full of adolescents, particularly one with the likes of Slytherin House might make anyone stern.

"I was told there is an order to this chaos," she said. "Um..." she looked at a parchment. "Lord Mayor Lupin and Amelia? You are going to have a son." After things quieted down, she continued. "Mr. Frank Longbottom and Amelia, a daughter. Okay, this next bit is not how I would have said it. It would seem we have proof that identical twins are not truly identical in all respects. As you all know, Fred and George Weasley are such twins as are George's wives Shelley and Georgina. As you all may recall, Shelley is expecting a daughter. Well, I can now announce that Georgina is expecting a son." She continued a little later. "Likewise, George and Ellen are expecting a daughter. Fred and Alicia are expecting a little boy. Bill and Lana a girl. Lord Longbottom and Penelope will have a son and last but not least, Lord Harry Black and Daphne are also expecting a son."

When things finally calmed down and Harry had a chance to catch his breath, he said to Poppy with a laugh: "Welcome to the madness, Madam Pomfrey!"

MONDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1996 - City of London Airport, London.

Four days ago, Robert and Rose Granger were site seeing in San Francisco California and planning a trip to visit Yosemite Park and the famous wine country in the Napa Valley. They returned to their hotel that evening to find a letter on their bed with what looked like two plane tickets. The two Grangers recognized the writing immediately. It was from their daughter, Hermione.

5 August, 1996

Dear Mum and Dad:

Our friends have found a way for us to be together again and be safe despite what's happening in the Wizarding World right now. I cannot give any specifics, but trust me, this will work!

Enclosed are plane tickets. You are booked on a United Airlines flight from San Francisco to New York that leaves 7 August at 10:35 your time. You'll have a two to three hour layover in New York and then you're booked on a British Airways flight to London. I apologize because that flight gets into London quite late in the evening.

You have a room reserved at the Hilton for two nights to allow you to adjust to the time change. On 12 August, there will be a limo waiting for you at 8:00 A.M. sharp! It will take you to the flight that will bring you back to me. All expenses are paid, of course.

You don't have to come back. I'm not hurt or in any trouble. But I want you to! I miss both of you SO MUCH! We have loads to talk about and I want you to know it's really nice where I am and I know you two will love it! We even need a dentist or two! (Well, I'm pretty sure I don't, but there are others...) Please come home. I want my family back!

I love you two so much and here we can see each other every day. We can be like we once were, and I miss that so much! Please come back? I love you!

Your daughter,

Hermione

"Cryptic," Robert Granger said as he read it.

"But how can we say no?" Rose asked.

"And Yosemite and Napa?"

"They're not going anywhere. I want to see my daughter again!"

"As do I, Rosie."

"So we're going?"

Robert Granger nodded and was duly rewarded for his efforts.

The Grangers were now seated in a large lounge. The lounge was large and quite comfortable as compared to the normal terminals that most passengers used. There were several people in the lounge with them - whole families.

Robert and Rose were seated at a table as they watched the families around them. Although they had all dressed normal, several were most likely magical. That had been somewhat obvious since when they arrived in the lounge they had been asked to turn over any wands or magical items that were not in their checked baggage. He could also tell by their bewilderment at this place. From the conversations they heard bits of, many of these families had missing daughters and they were all going somewhere where they would be told about them.

"May we join you?" a balding man asked who was with a blonde haired woman who appeared to be about the same age as the Grangers.

"Be our guests," Robert said.

"David Greengrass," the man said introducing himself. "This is my wife Vivian."

"Robert Granger," Robert replied, "and my wife Rose."

"Granger? Not Hermione's parents, are you?" Vivian asked.

"Erm - yes," Robert said. "She is our daughter..."

"Thank Merlin!" Vivian exclaimed. "Thank Merlin you're safe! I cannot say how..." She began to weep.

"You're daughter and her husband saved our lives," David said. "Not just Vivian and me, but all our daughters as well."

"H-husband?" Robert said. "What husband?"

"You don't know?"

"Er ..."

"She's Lady Potter,"

"Lady?" Rose asked. "What do you mean by that?"

"Lord Harry Potter is the fifty-first of his line dating back to the first Lord - Lord Sir Galahad Potter."

"Galahad," Robert Granger asked in confusion, "as in the Knights of the Round Table? King Arthur's Galahad?"

"The very one," David said.

"That was real?"

"Quite real. The records in your world were destroyed ages ago, but ours were not. Of course, they're all in Latin, but..."

"Still," Robert Granger shot back, "I want to know how it is MY DAUGHTER is married and why your daughters are somehow involved."

Mr. Greengrass then proceeded to tell the Grangers all he knew about their Daughter and surprise son-in-law and about what had happened to his family and his two oldest daughters. In the course of his explanation, he told the Grangers all about just what role women had in the wizarding world, about magical guardians, wives, consorts and concubines, about the various bonding rites and what the bonds meant and about how only by becoming a consort could a young witch avoid becoming a concubine, if that was indeed what her magical guardian intended for her.

"If I had known this five years ago," Robert began, "we would never have allowed her to enter your world."

"You could have kept her out of Hogwarts," David said. "We can't force you to send your child there. But if her magical guardian intended to sell her off as a concubine, there is no way to prevent that - unless she became a Consort first."

"Who was Hermione's guardian if not me?"

"As a Muggle Born assigned to Hogwarts, it would be the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot - Albus Dumbledore."

"Well, at least there's that," Rose Granger said. "Hermione respects him."

"I wouldn't," David said. "I had to sell my daughters. I told you why, but there's more. In your world had someone tried to extort me like that, I could run to the police. In my world, I could do the same, but in all likelihood there would be little they could do about it and certainly nothing once I made the Vow. Dumbledore is part of the problem in our world. And, if you must know, the majority of Muggle Born witches wind up as concubines. In most cases, the only ones who don't are those fortunate enough to become a consort. And it's Dumbledore who sells them. I'm sure if he could find away, he'd sell them all."

"I still cannot believe Hermione is somehow wrapped up in all of this," Rose said. She had read the book on Bonds Hermione sent her and knew Hermione was one of the contributing authors, but had not understand what it truly meant until now. "I mean, I guess the Consort



thing makes a little sense, Robert. You did give the boy your blessing after all and if she found out about what might happen to her, that makes sense. But concubines? You remember her rants about House Elves, Bob. This is even worse than that morally speaking."

"I guess we are going to have to have a long talk with those two," Bob agreed. "None of this really makes sense."

"Katie!" a woman's voice practically screamed with joy, attracting the Grangers' and Greengrass's attention. A woman about their age seemed to be running across the lounge rate at a sandy haired young woman who appeared to be dressed not unlike an airline ticket agent. The young woman was soon smothered in a hug and it was clear the two were having a conversation. After several minutes, the older woman let her go and the younger one went to what looked like a podium and picked up a microphone.

"Ladies and gentleman," she said in an amplified voice, "may I have your attention, please?" She didn't really need to say that as the previous scene had succeeded in getting everyone's attention. "My name is Katie Bell and we will begin boarding the flight shortly. First, I need to find out if everyone is here. When I call your party, just let me know."

"I know the Bells are here," Katie continued. "Bromstone? Party of four?"

"Here," another male voice replied.

"Campbell? Party of four?"

"Here!"

"Grant? Oh my! Party of seventeen?"

"All present and accounted for Miss."

"Granger? Party of two?"

"Here," Robert answered.

"Greengrass? Party of five?"

"We're here," David answered.

"Patil? Party of two?"

"Here," a voice answered.

"Perks? Party of three?"

"Here."

"Plumber? Party of eight?"

"Here," another voice answered.

"Excellent. Okay, this will be a full flight. It's open seating. Flying time to our final destination will be about two and a half hours or so. You will all be taken to your hotel for lunch and to meet your daughters at the Manor. Now, if everyone will follow me out to the plane."

The Grangers and the others followed the young lady out onto the tarmac. A large, white propeller plane was waiting for them. The main wing was on top of the body and the elevators were on top of the tail. The plane had a very clean look about it and looked very new. It was painted a glossy white, except for the tail which was bright red. "PB Enterprises, Ltd." was painted in red on the fuselage and a large gold PB was on the tail. Katie led them to a door at the rear of the airplane and remained by the fold down steps as each passenger entered.

Bob Granger took a window seat near the front and his wife sat behind them - right behind the Greengrass's and their two younger daughters. Their oldest sat across the aisle from the Grangers with a younger girl named Cheryl Abbot. He could hear the rear door close and latch and then saw the young woman enter the cockpit. He soon heard the whine of an engine starting and could see the propeller on his side and behind him starting to spin.

The young woman was now at the front of the cabin facing them with a microphone in her hand.

"Good morning and welcome aboard. I will now explain the safety features of this De Havilland Bombardier, DHC 8 Model 315 aircraft..."

MONDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1996 – Lake Weasley Resort Hotel, The Manors, Charenwell.

The flight had been rather pleasant, although Robert was a little surprised about the direction. Having been in the service in his youth, he could tell both the from landmarks on the ground and the position of the sun out the window the rough direction the plane was flying as it left the south coast of England west of the Isle of Wight and flew out to sea. He knew there was no land in that direction for thousands of miles if they held the course. Assuming the plane did so, the nearest land he could think of was might be the Bahamas or some Caribbean island and he also knew this type of plane could never fly that far. Apparently, the flight attendant knew this as well. During the flight, she told them about their destination – this Charenwell place - and that it was an island only about three hundred miles or so southwest of Britain, and an island that had been hidden by magic from the rest of the world for over a thousand years. Robert knew as much from one of the books Hermione had sent them, although the book left out exactly where this island nation was in relation to the rest of the world. Then again, it made some sense that it was so close, relatively speaking. After all, it had been discovered by a group of "second sons" of Mercia in long boats in the Seventh Century. Even the Vikings had crossed to the Americas a few centuries later in stages, he recalled.

The plane had landed at Charenwell International Airport in Jamestown and the passengers had been loaded onto two motor coaches once they collected their checked baggage. In all respects, the place reminded him of a normal airport except there were no customs and it was almost empty. That and the fact that instead of the usual posters advertising hotels and tourist sites, there seemed to be recruiting posters all over the place.

The bus ride took them along the main road through Jamestown which looked both brand new and yet abandoned. The young woman at the front who said her name was Dora told them that this city was brand new and that its population had not yet arrived. As they drove through the town, they learned of the plan to "evacuate" thousands if not tens of thousands of magicals and their families from Britain and relocate them here. They would not be refugees in any sense of the word. In a few months, there would be more than enough jobs to go around and the new arrivals would not be expected to return home when all was said and done.

The bus passed through Pottersport and its importance was discussed, as well as the locations of the best shops and restaurants. During the ride, Dora told them that this country was probably the most magical on earth – which Robert had read – with well over eighty percent of the population being magical and the rest had married magical. There was no Statute of Secrecy here since magic was not hidden. Robert figured this was more for the magical people, especially when Dora talked about most of the magical residents used magic far less often than their British cousins. While this was a magical country, a non-magical could live here and never really feel out of place. Very few jobs absolutely required magical ability and everyone was comfortable with technology. People used telephones, drove cars, preferred electrical lighting to the gas lamps and candles used in magical Britain, watched the telly and all of that.

They were driven through the Manors, the town where they would be invited to live when all was said and done. It too looked new, but it was designed to look like it had been around for over a century at least. The hotel was the largest and tallest building in this rather spread out town. It was eight stories tall with its restaurant on the top floor. The Grangers and the others were brought to the hotel, allowed to check into their rooms and then enjoy a very nice lunch in the Restaurant. Finally, when lunch was over, a tall and older looking woman stood before them.

"Good afternoon," she said, "and welcome to Charenwell."

"Where's my daughter?" a voice asked.

"I can assure you, Mr. Grant, your daughter Doctor Grant is nearby and you shall see her later this afternoon. At this moment, she is busy seeing patients either at the clinic or the hospital."

"Our Mallory's a doctor?" a woman asked. "But she is or was a witch!"

"She is indeed a witch, and a Healer as well. She was afforded an opportunity to pursue her non-magical education after she attained her Healing Certification some years ago and studied medicine in the States. But, as a practicing physician and Healer specializing in women's health, reproduction and pediatric care, she can be quite busy. I don't think any of her patients are due today, but you never know with those things. Now, that being said, my name is Minerva McGonagall..."

"But you can't be," Rose said. "Her younger sister or daughter maybe..."

"I can assure you, Mrs. Granger, I am who I say I am. While I am sixty-eight years old, I am a witch and we do age differently than non-magical women. I may be old enough to retire in your world, but for a witch I am barely middle aged. My mother and grandmother might still be alive had they not been killed over fifty years ago during the Muggle Second World War. As for looking older, well we do have spells that would do that. That being said, for the two families who might not know of me at all, I taught Transfiguration at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for forty years and was Deputy Headmistress for twelve of those years."

"Was?" David Greengrass.

"Due to many factors, some of which I will be telling you this afternoon, I elected to retire from those positions to accept an offer here in Charenwell as the National Director of the Educational Development Board. But I am not here before you now in that capacity.

"There are nine families here in this room. All of you are here on common purpose: to be reunited with your daughters. Two families – at least the parents – know why their daughters are here, two

probably suspect the reason, while the rest may have no idea at all. For seven of the families, your daughters have been away for mere days or weeks at the most. For the other two, it's been between three and twenty-three years..."

Minerva then launched into a version of the lecture she had been giving to the "new" concubines practically five days a week for almost the past month. There was a difference, naturally. This version, one she would use for all the families of all of the bonded young women now residing in Charenwell was not designed to convince anyone to accept becoming a concubine, rather to convince their families to accept that this had happen and to approach this new country and their daughter/sister/aunt's new life. She explained first about Consorts and the Consort bond and how it formed, leaving out the details of the ritual as there were younger children present. She referred to a ritual based upon acts of physical intimacy one would normally expect between a husband and wife. She spoke about the power of that bond, how it drew a couple together far more completely than any other form of wedding or marriage vow and that it was permanent. She then spoke about Concubines. This talk focused on what the bond was meant to be and how it could be and often was abused, particularly in magical Britain. She also made clear that only the magical father or magical guardian of a young witch could enter her into such a bond.

"How could this have happened?" Mr. Perks asked.

This question prompted a discussion about the laws in Magical Britain and in particular the laws regarding Magical Guardians. Even those raised in the magical world were stunned to learn that the fates of Muggle Borns, and in particular Muggle Born witches, were often at the whim of a wizard who neither knew nor owed any loyalty to them or their families. That a stranger had such authority over anyone's life was stunning, but that the law extended such authority to magically raised as well, such as in Minerva's case where her father died without designating a successor and without a surviving wizard on that side of her family or, in the case of the Patils, merely because the father was a foreigner.

"Why did you include yourself?" Rose asked.

"I became a concubine when I was fifteen," Minerva replied. "That was fifty-three years ago and I've been one ever since."

"So, you're a slave?" Mr. Bell asked.

Minerva had anticipated this kind of question. "I won't lie to you and say that the concubine bond cannot be a form of slavery. For the vast majority ensnared by it in Britain, that is virtually if not precisely what they become. So long as the woman is not allowed the opportunity to allow the bond to mature, so long as her free will remains suppressed to the full extent the initial bond allows, she is, no matter how benign her treatment, just that. But recall what I said. If she is allowed to and chooses to take the next step and reinforce the bond of her own free will, then she becomes her wizard's wife in all the ways that matter. True, I am aware there are some women in the non-magical world who might not see a real distinction, but I'm talking about magical bonds and not philosophical musings.

"That being said, we're not in magical Britain anymore. This is Charenwell and our laws and customs are vastly different as are the social conditions. Our society is not the aristocratic, class structured oligarchy that is magical Britain. We do not have the disparity between the sexes that still exists there where there is but one wizard of any status for every two witches. Moreover, our history and that of magical Britain diverged fourteen hundred years ago and travelled a very different path and that path has affected how we related to each other and to the rest of the world both magical and non-magical. Many of you may have been told or concluded that sociologically speaking Magical Britain is at least a few centuries behind its non-magical counterpart. This is a fair assessment and when one considers that slavery in many forms was not unlawful back then, one can see that while concubines might seem extreme, they are not exactly a novel concept, just one that the societal progress passed over long ago."

"And what are these differences?" Mr. Bell asked.

"Basically, the culture, customs and laws in magical Britain have encouraged wizards to abuse the nature of that bond," Minerva

replied. "From its first introduction here, our culture, customs and laws have prevented such abuse. Early on, Magical Britons used concubines to keep magic in the magical world and to subjugate witches in general creating and sustaining a wizard dominated society in fact if not truly in law. It might have been easier since in such a bond state, the witch would have no offspring who might one day question such treatment of their ancestor. From the very beginning, concubines were brought here not for the – er – entertainment of wizards, but for the purpose of raising families, to be wives and mothers. Our genealogical records dating back to the seventh century are surprisingly thorough, far more so than in Britain. Every magical child who has been born here can honestly state that he or she is descended from a concubine if you look back far enough. In the case of our Duke, his Great-great grandmother was one. It is much harder to promote an abusive and oppressive culture when you are descended from those one might seek to abuse or oppress.

"This land was discovered in 677 by a band of wizard warriors from Britain led by Dargoth, the younger son of the eighth Lord Potter the first such Lord being Sir Gallahad..."

"As in King Arthur?" Mr. Perks asked. "Are you saying he was real?"

"Quite real," Minerva replied. "Our records of him were not destroyed in the subsequent upheavals. Between the days of Arthur and Gallahad and what we now know as England, the Anglo-Saxons, Jutes and Danes all invaded and plundered and were followed eventually by the Normans who also tried to eliminate what had been there before. Arthur survived as an oral tradition, a legend, but the records of his time were lost to the non-magical world.

"Anyway, Dargoth and his companions set sail – we believe from the River Avon – in search of new lands as they were not about to inherit any lands otherwise. They found this land which was, at the time, quite uninhabited. It was also quite remote meaning they had a couple hundred miles of open ocean between them and any potential adversaries. They explored this island for some time before returning to their former homes in 678. In 680, they returned with their families, stores, livestock and everything they believed would be necessary to settle this land. Dargoth was sixty years old at the time and with him



were his five children and their families including his twelve year old eldest grandson Dirgard. The records indicate the initial population of the new land in 681 was around 627 people.

"But setting up a new land far removed from anyone else is not conducive to long life. It was hard work and despite births and marriages among the youngest, by 690 the population had dropped below 400. The leaders did not want to encourage mass emigration from England fearing they would just bring to their new home the problems of their old. Still, unless more people came, the land would die. Dargoth's grandson Dirgard, who was in line to become a future Lord of the Isle, was tasked by his grandfather to import women to the island. Gold had been discovered in our mountains. Gold and coins were rare in England at the time. Most trade was by barter. But a little gold went a long way. Dirgard returned from England with sixty-five women, some Muggle and the majority young witches he either bought from their parents or at auction. As Lord of the Isle, while his grandson had made the actual purchases, the purchases and their importation had been under Dargoth's authority. The new arrivals were bound to the younger adult males of the land as wives. As such, it was forbidden that the new women would serve in any other capacity. They could neither be sold, nor shared and if their 'husband' died, that family was obligated to support them for life. This began the custom that became law.

"In 699, Dargoth's father and older brother were killed back in England and Dargoth, now Lord of the Isle also become Lord Potter and took control of his family's English estates. This factor led to the beginning of our current governmental structure. Dargoth could neither spend all his time here governing his new lands nor all his time in England managing his ancestral lands. A council was formed here to govern. The Lord of the Isle, while still influential and while the sole land owner, generally stayed out of local affairs but retained control over external affairs. As such, he retained the sole authority to allow or restrict immigration. Since that time, all who have moved here from abroad have only done so by leave of the Lord of the Isle, later the Duke. Moreover, since importation of concubines and such fell within that retention of authority, only the Lord could purchase and import, although he was never obligated to bind them to him alone. For centuries, purchasers in England bought concubines that were

then brought here and bonded and married to the men for the purpose of at least sustaining the population. In old times, when the community desired to expand its farming, trades and such, more concubines were brought in to ensure a corresponding expansion of the population. Such imports would also increase in number and frequency in response to famine or epidemic – or rather the recovery thereafter. The one constant was that the Lord himself always had a few concubines in addition to his wife at law or consort. This ensured an heir.

"In all cases, the records, journals and such from those times – at least the ones we have translated thus far – show that the women imported to this place have had more opportunities and probably better lives than the ones they could expect under similar circumstances had they remained in Britain. In the cases of the Muggle Borns and those witched from the lower strata in that society, arguably their lives were better across the board. They have been contributing members of our society regardless of the social station to which they were born back in Britain. They all have been encouraged to finish school, even when the notion of education of witches beyond what is now known as O.W.L.s was frowned upon. For some centuries, if you saw a witch studying for her N.E.W.T.s in Britain, chances were very good she was either born here or was brought here as a concubine. While the Lord and Duke is barred under our constitution from positions in our Ministry, our Legislature or Courts and by custom so have been his Wives at Law and Consorts, this ban never extended to his concubines. Concubines, whether bound to the Lord, his brothers, sons or others, have served at one point in just about every position within our government save our armed forces, to the extent we had one. And now, even that has changed."

"How so?" Robert Granger asked.

"You will learn fairly soon that Charenwell is and always has been allied to the legitimate royal family with dominion over our Duke's lands in England. As I said earlier, the Lord of the Isle owns the lands here and always has. All told, he has title over about 3,500 square miles here in Charenwell. This is but one third of his entire land holdings. He owns over six thousand square miles in the British Isles,

mostly in England. House Potter has never sold a single acre of land and has holdings going back at least as far as the First Century."

"Bloody hell," a few voices said.

"Our alliance to the Crown is defensive by custom. We will fight to defend England for in doing so we preserve the Estate of the Duke and, as he is the largest single tax payer in this Country, the bulk of our tax base. A few weeks ago, owing to the growing crisis in Magical Britain, Her Majesty and the Prime Minister asked us to honor our obligations and intervene on their behalf. We have no standing army, but we are raising one or will be soon. We are manning an Air Force.

"Of the eleven young ladies whose families are here today, all but two are training in our Air Force and may well be flying about as we speak. Those two are Mallory Grant, whose position as a Healer/Doctor is considered too important; and Eleanor Bromstone, who is currently considered too young. Ms. Hermione Granger is currently in advanced flight training preparing to fly Lancasters for CRAF Bomber Command and may well be appointed as a Squadron Commander I'm told. Ms. Daphne Greengrass is also in Bomber Command flying Bostons. Ms. Astoria Greengrass is in Transport Command learning to fly Dakotas. Ms. Stacey Campbell is in CRAF Fighter Command learning to fly Typhoons. Ms. Bell and Ms. Plumber are in Primary Flight Training and Ms. Padma Patil, Parvati Patil and Ms. Perks are scheduled to start training within the next few weeks."

"So our daughters are expected to fight?" Mr. Bell asked.

"I'm not in a position to discuss Air Force personnel policy," Minerva replied. "Your daughters are in a better position to discuss that. But as I understand it, given that the British Magicals have no means to combat conventional aircraft ... well, this is why our Air Force will be manned mainly by our young women. They will fight from the air, supporting the young men we send to fight on the ground. The risk to them is significantly less than ground operations. But I suggest you ask them about this."

"What about their educations?" Rose asked.

"It will continue," Minerva said. "Those who are serving will be in an intensive course that we hope will allow them to keep pace with where they should be, but they will continue towards their O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s regardless. They are all also encouraged to consider continuing their educations beyond those levels, but that decision will be theirs to make when the time comes."

"And just how did our daughters become ensnared in all this?" Mr. Grant asked. "I understand, even if it disgusts me, the vile notion of that damnable auction and magical guardians who see our girls as little more than a commodity. But how did they wind up here rather than somewhere else?"

Minerva nodded. "In my case, I was purchased at Auction by the then Duke. He had been forced into an arranged marriage years before and had acquired a concubine so that he might form a proper, love based relationship with a woman. His wife bore his children, but his love raised them. They were together over twenty years when she was killed. She was visiting her family in London and was killed during the Blitz. I came along a couple years later. I was his love for thirty-six years. When he was murdered in our last magical war in '79, I passed to his son and when he died, to his heir in time.

"Mallory and Stacey were not so fortunate at first. Their first experiences as concubines were as horrible as you can imagine. In both cases, their wizard lost them to pay off debts. Mallory went to a young man who came to love her as a wife and encouraged her in her education and ambitions to become a Healer. When he was murdered earlier this year and by agreement between the two of them, she went to his designated heir. Stacey was brought here because her wizard defaulted on a debt owed to the Duke and was brought here as soon as the Duke knew of her.

"The Greengrasses know exactly why and how their daughters came to be here. The Bromstones can guess, although their daughter was sold at auction as were all the others save Hermione Granger. Hermione is a Consort and, more importantly, Consort to the current Duke. As such, it was she who convinced the Duke to bring the others in. Many of the young ladies who have been brought here

were their friends and neither of them were about to let their friends become slaves. I know and agree this is not the ideal situation. But the Duke and Duchess were not about to sit idly by and let their friends suffer, nor would they allow that to happen to anyone else this year. The Duke purchased every young woman up for auction this year – fifty one in total. Through purchases, debts and other means, a total of 134 concubines have been brought from Britain to Charenwell this summer. Those women are not all bound to the Duke. They are split amongst ten separate families." Minerva decided not to mention that two of those families, Potter and Black, were under the same wizard. "Four of these families are incredibly wealthy and two others will be given their talents. The other four may be in time but if not they will be supported by the Duke as an extension of his own. I think you will see that when you see where your daughters are living."

"We have now covered the basics," Minerva said after a pause. "I am sure you have many more questions, but most of the answers are probably unique to the young lady in questions. I know you are all eager to see them again so we'll leave it here for now. The buses are waiting out front to take you to them."

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (SI-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*P
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*P
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).\*
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).\*
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).
12. Eleanor May (Bromstone) Potter-Black, age 13 (Hu-2).

#### HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (SI-5).\*P – boy.
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).\*P
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).\*
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Cathy Alicia (Abrams) Black-Potter, age 12 (Hu-1).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.
2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.
2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.
3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*P
4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*
5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P – girl.
7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P

8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5)\*.P
9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5)\*.P
10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).\*
11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Francine Sally (Broadmoor) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Wanda Helen Parker, age 13 (Gr-2).
16. Bonnie Faith Carter, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).
2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5)\*.P - boy, girl (twins).
3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra)\*.P – boy.
4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD)\*.P
5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA)\*.P
6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5)\*.P
7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).\*
8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5)\*.P
9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).
10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).
12. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).
13. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).
14. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).
15. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).
16. Su (Li) Longbottom, age 16 (Ra-5).
17. Morag Coleen (McDougal) Longbottom, age 16 (Ra-5).
18. Tracy Davis, age 16 (1/14/80) (SI-5), Concubine Neville 8/12/96.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5)\*.P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5)\*.P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6)\*.P
5. Rachel Francine (Peters) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).\*
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP)\*.P
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD)\*.P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5)\*.P

9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).\*
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne Albright, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P – girl.
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*P
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P – boy.
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5)\*.P
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).\*P
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza Graham, age 13 (Gr-2).
15. Alice Paulette McGregor, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura Carpenter, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.\*P
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P – boy.
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).\*
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).\*
7. Olivia Patricia Kennedy, age 22 (7/3/74) (SP); Original Bond: 8/22/90. CONCUBINE REMUS: 8/12/96.

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P



2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP). \*P
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP). \*P – girl.
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE). \*P
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD). \*P
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5)\*.
7. Simone Marie Buchanan, age 27 (12/5/68) (SA-5); Original Bond: 7/16/85. CONCUBINE FRANK: 8/12/96.

Charlie Weasley, age 23.

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.
2. Christina Maria Canterbury, age 23 (6/6/73) (SD-6); Original Bond: (7/17/89). CONCUBINE CHARLIE: 8/12/96.

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).

1. Jennifer Susan Albans, age 27 (9/20/68) (PE); Original Bond: 7/15/84. CONCUBINE ARTHUR, 8/12/96.

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE: FAMILIES (PART II)

MONDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1996 – Black House Manor, Charenwell.

Harry was seated in his new office in Black House. This was actually the first Duke Day where he would use his office and in a way it was fortuitous. He was scheduled to have a meeting later that day with some people to discuss the Evacuation which had just began. He knew three flights were due in that day, two of which bringing some of the first families who would be living in the new city of Jamestown and the third – which was actually the first scheduled to arrive – bringing in nine families that would be living at The Manors. All nine of those were families of his ladies in other words his new in-laws. Fortunately for Harry, meeting them would not occur for him until the day after tomorrow his time so for now it was merely a fact and not an impending worry.

But these first flights were a part of this morning's focus for him. He poured over a stack of documents regarding the planned and now ongoing evacuation and he, like the people at the Charenwell Ministries of Public Works, Education, Heath and Public Welfare (which was not about passing out public funds to people but keeping track of population figures and other factors that might affect housing, transportation, schools, taxes and other things of such nature) was rapidly coming to the conclusion, for better or worse, that they had collectively underestimated the scope of the evacuation. Public Welfare also maintained all public records such as births, deaths, marriages and such and it was obvious that, while they had not done a census in years until just this past summer, they had a far better handle on their population than did their magical British counterparts, a point their memos made clear as they were highly critical of their British magical cousins record keeping abilities.

"It is a wonder that they even know who to tax, much less where they are and all that is necessary in determining and estimating current and future needs for government services," one memo politely complained. "The recent and foolhardy attempts against our sovereignty seemed the work of a madman. But if these records are indicative of the level of skill across the way, I would argue that they

are not truly mad, rather they are idiots which may even be worse!" another memo less politely opined.

The estimates that led to the building of Jamestown were based upon population figures obtained from the British Ministry of Magic back in early July. The Charenwell government used those as a starting point, but requested, if possible, that the raw data be obtained rather than the final results they had received. Those final results indicated that magical Britain had a population of 65,232 witches and wizards. Naturally, this did not include Squibs nor the non-magical families of 'Muggle Borns.' That same set of documents indicated that the total Muggle Born population was 21,467. Taking into account that not all Muggle Borns could be expected to be relocated, the government of Charenwell estimated that there would be a need for housing for an additional population of around twenty to twenty-five thousand. Naturally, this assumed the British Ministry had accurate records and estimates and naturally, like all things this summer, any assumptions proved wrong.

The last accurate census in magical Britain (assuming it was accurate) was in 1982 just after the War. It was ordered to determine the true scope of the War that had just ended. There had been no attempt at a census since then and all the numbers the Brits were using were based upon that census and assumptions as to population growth. The first flaw was the census itself. While the Charenwell Ministries were willing to believe it was accurate to a point, the memos concluded that it had utterly failed to count everyone. Specifically, in addition to not counting Squibs, the population numbers did not include any Muggle Borns who had not started magical school as of September 1st, 1981. Basically, this omission meant almost all of the Muggle Born Concubines who had or would be arriving in Charenwell did not exist as far as the Ministry census was concerned even if they were already born.

As misleading as that omission could be, if the Brits had used an accurate means of estimating population changes going forward, which their numbers might not be accurate, they would at least have been close enough. Except this did not appear to be what had happened. For estimation purposes, the Ministry had based population changes on historical trends. Such things were not

uncommon but were only as accurate as the trend data applied. They had used the birth rates and such from the preceding five years and this meant their numbers were way off. The Brits had also used the death rate for the same period of time.

Their methodology, while not ideal in any event and particularly where they have failed to follow up with a more recent census, would be marginally adequate provided that the change in population over the historical period was representative of an overall, long term trend. But, in choosing population data from the period of 1976 through 1981, they selected data that was not representative. This period was at the height of their recent war, a period of great dislocation, economic upheaval and other factors. The death rate, naturally, would have been representative of a population embroiled in a bloody civil war and not a population at peace or one with a naturally declining life expectancy. It was also a period of record low birth rates both in relation to the size of the existing population and in real numbers. Given the increasing uncertainties, fewer and fewer couples were having fewer and fewer children. While similar trends have been seen in the non-magical populations in the developed world, those trends are generally attributed to significant decreases in infant mortality and increases in life expectancy coupled with sociological trends towards smaller families. The trends the British used were based upon artificial factors, namely a war and economic uncertainty, which were unique to the time and not reflective of a long term sociologic change.

Based upon the school enrollment data we have obtained, which includes all enrollments beginning with the class entering in 1981 through the class that will enter in 2006, it is fair to say their estimating factors are far off the mark. The birth rate in magical Britain between 1970 (the class that entered in 1981) and 1975 was fairly constant. For Hogwarts (which we use since His Highness is familiar with that school) the resulting classes had between 57 and 63 students of which between 18 and 21 were "Muggle Borns." The variation did not trend either up or down, at least not in a manner from which we could confidently say there was a long term trend one way or the other. From 1976 through the fall of 1981 the birthrate was in a constant state of decline. The class entering in 1987 (born 1975 – 1976) had 59 students and then as follows:

1988 – 51  
1989 – 47  
1990 – 43  
1991 – 39 (His Highness's year)  
1992 – 41

The proportion of Muggle Borns to those of other parental status oddly remained about the same throughout the general population at approximately 30 to 34 percent. But as those numbers note, there was a significant decline in class size and this decline was across all six of the schools for the same years. We believe that untimely death in war, emigration abroad, coupled with a general sense of hopelessness were factors in the sharp drop within the magical community but there was a corresponding proportionate drop in Muggle Born births as well which defies any simple or known explanation. It should be noted that these were the lowest class sizes in the last century or more. In forming their ongoing population estimates, the British Magicals assumed that these numbers represented the long term rate and estimated, in the case of Hogwarts, class sizes between 43 and 47 would be the norm. As they are arguably now learning, this was not the case. The following are the Hogwarts numbers for the next four years:

1993 – 48  
1994 – 71  
1995 – 78  
1996 – 82 (based upon numbers from M. McGonagall regarding the class scheduled to start in September 1996).

Moreover, it should also be noted that while class size at Hogwarts has more than doubled between 1991 and now, its growth does not reflect the growth at the other five schools:

Hogwarts: 1991 (39); 1996 (82); growth: 110%.  
St. Georges: 1991 (62); 1996 (148); growth: 139%.  
Prince Edward: 1991 (65); 1996 (153); growth: 135%.  
St. David: 1991 (59); 1996 (133); growth: 125%.  
St. Andrew: 1991 (64); 1996 (161); growth: 151%.  
St. Patrick: 1991 (66); 1996 (172); growth: 161%.

Many factors may explain this growth although it should be noted that the 1996 figures exceed the largest class sizes previously experienced and cannot be attributed to a corresponding increase in the overall magical population during the same period. One factor is what might be called a post war Baby Boom for which there is historical precedent. But one would expect that such a boom would fall mainly within the magical families and we would see no such degree of increase in the Muggle Born numbers given that as a group and by definition they would have been unaware of the conditions in the magical world in the 1970's and 1980's. As one would anticipate that the events affecting birthrates in the magical world would have no effect upon Muggle Born birthdates, one would expect their aggregate numbers to reflect birthrates in their world which were comparatively constant and therefore a decrease in their proportion of the total class. But, while there has in fact been an increase in the per capita birth rate since 1982 in the magical population, it falls far short of these numbers. Some of the increase can also be attributed to increases in magical immigration to Britain as well as the return of families that left Britain during the war. However, what has also occurred and what we cannot explain is both the increase in Muggle Borns in terms of their numbers and their proportion to the overall new student population. As previously stated, historically the percentage of such Muggle Borns to the magical population at large has been on average 32%. However, class years 1995 and 1996 at the National Schools have jumped from that historic average to about 41%. (Hogwarts is steady at 32%, but their admissions of Muggle Borns is by lottery and not by population demographics. In other words, it is arbitrarily fixed at about that rate regardless of the real proportions for that year.)

It should be noted that 1996 is not the highest year. The class sizes will peak in 1999 and then begin a slow decline through 2006. However, the 2006 class year will still be larger than any class prior to 1995 and the proportion of Muggle Borns will remain above historic levels.

The reason for the increase in Muggle Borns is not known nor do we speculate upon its cause. Our study was directed at providing a rough estimate in terms of our needs to support the relocation of the

"at risk" population from Britain to Charenwell and, in particular, with an eye towards permanent resettlement for the vast majority of them. As His Highness is aware, Jamestown was planned and built upon the estimate that the number of "at risk" immigrants would be around 25,000 based upon an estimate of some 21,000 Muggle Borns total. We now believe these numbers fall far below reality. This is particularly true since the responses we have received to date requesting relocation include not just the Muggle Borns we have contacted and their non-magical immediate family, but extended family as well (Aunts, Uncles, Grandparents, cousins and so on.) The responses we have received tend to show that despite the British Magicals efforts, Muggle parents have not kept their magical child's status secret from their extended family, at least those they could trust. (It is also possible that economic factors in non-magical Britain might be a factor.) We now estimate that a conservative estimate of the total number of "Evacuees" may exceed 50,000. This does not include families associated with the British Military Advisory Group (3,500), or the fact that both the Educational Development Board and our Health Service will be seeking teachers, Healers and others from abroad to meet their anticipated needs.

Harry put the report down and rubbed his eyes just as the door to the office opened. He looked up and saw Cissy standing there.

"The average age for becoming a Duke is around seventy," he moaned. "And I can see why. Have you read this?" he added indicating the report.

"I have," Cissy said.

"I barely understand a word of it," Harry complained. "Okay, that's not true. I understand the words, but what does it mean?"

"It means we should expect at least twice as many new residents," Cissy began.

"50,000 and more, I got that bit finally," Harry agreed, "but the rest of it?"

"They basically said two things," Cissy replied. "First of all, the population numbers the Ministry is using are all wrong and would be regardless. We assumed they were right and that there are about 65,000 magicals in Britain. So this says it's probably more. Moreover, since we are not limiting this to magical, this says two things. First, there are far more children in Britain than they think and we were led to believe and second far more Muggle Born children. Also, as to the Muggle Borns, there are far more new families than we anticipated, hence the revised estimates."

"But why?"

"They don't know and I'm not about to guess. You already suspected something like this might happen when you started planning for the possibility of a second new city on the North Coast between North and East Farm."

"Just didn't think we'd need to build it this soon. And Jamestown was planned with an eye towards full employment for its residents – at least those over the age of 22 or so. If we double the population, we double the need for jobs and... Well, at least food won't be a problem as we already produce about five or six times what our current population consumes."

"There is a bit of a bright side to this."

"Oh?"

"With the original plan, we would be hard pressed to field a large army, at least that's what the MAG officers are saying. Most the recruits would have to come from young people such as yourself who otherwise were supposed to still be in school. This would give us a labor surplus as in more people than we can easily employ. That means we can have a fully manned Air Force and a much larger Army without adversely affecting our job market, yes? And, as many more will be in the services and will be until the crisis is over, certainly for the next two years or so, that gives you two years to figure out how to employ them when it's all over, yes?"



Harry nodded. "Okay. That makes some sense. Is there a reason why you entered? A meeting I've forgotten about?"

Cissy shook her head, walked over and gently sat in Harry's lap. "I just sensed you needed a little break. Was I wrong?" she added before kissing him.

"Er, no," Harry said as the kiss broke. "But this kind of break may have to wait until this afternoon. Ginny wore me out last night."

"I thought she was the night before for you." Cissy pouted.

"Then Connie and Sally-Anne are guilty as well," Harry said.

"I can wait," Cissy said, "so long as it's this afternoon."

"It will be."

"Guess it's a good thing Ginny has flight training," Cissy giggled. "With the news she got this morning, I swear she would have tried to wear you out again!"

Harry chuckled. "Probably. I'm just thankful there're no bondings in my near future..."

"There are the parents..."

"Which may well be more dangerous than the bondings..."

"The Greengrasses are already on your side in this," Cissy said. "My guess is Eleanor's family will be as well. The Grangers won't be surprised about you and Hermione..."

"Although the rest will shock them. They gave us their blessing but I don't think it covered all the rest of this."

"Hermione has been – er – conditioning them for the shock."

"Oh?"

"She sent them a self updating copy of our bonding book so they probably have an idea about what's coming. I won't say they'll be thrilled but..."

"The others?"

"The Patils come from a culture where this sort of relationship is not offensive so they may not be an issue. I think the Campbells and Grants may overlook it to an extent given that they have their daughters back..."

"Which leaves our remaining three Muggle Borns: the Bells, Perks and Plumbers."

"Hopefully the others will help with them."

"I hope so. I'd hate to be the shortest tenured Duke in Charenwell history. It's bad enough I'm the youngest."

"You'll do fine. Besides, for you that's the day after tomorrow."

"Which means by this evening, I'll know if I'm dead or not."

"Do you always have to be so gloomy?"

"Given my life before Charenwell? It's force of habit."

Cissy nodded. She understood that point of view thoroughly.

There was a knock at the door and it flew open. "Little" Laura was standing there panting.

"Didn't mean to interrupt," she began. "Um ... actually I did. There's a problem outside!"

"Problem?" Harry asked.

"Dragons! Lots of them on the Pitch!"

"We know about them..."

"They're new ones too and I think they mean to fight each other or something!"

"Oh bugger!" Harry ignored Cissy's comment about maybe later and the three of them headed out of the office and towards the Pitch. There were indeed a lot of dragons, perhaps twenty in all. Half were the black Horntails and they seemed to be protecting the three houses. The other half were smaller and red. Two were in the middle of the Pitch snorting at each other while the rest were behind their respective "leader."

"This is OUR land!" Harry heard the red leader say. "It's always been our land! You're not welcome here!"

"We were given leave by our friend and ally, the Duke of the humans!"

"He speaks for humans! Not us! We don't give you leave!"

"Excuse me?" Harry said from what he hoped was a safe distance, "Is there a problem here?"

"This is none of your business, Human!" the red said.

"This is my Pitch, my home and the Horntails are my friends, so that makes this my business. And you are?"

"Humans have no say in the affairs of Dragons!" the red shot back.

"My Queen! My Queen!" another red dragon said. It had apparently walked forward. "The Human is talking to you!"

"I am aware of that! I can hear!"

"No, my Queen! He's talking to you in OUR tongue! The Oath, my Queen! The Oath must be honored!"

The Queen Red seemed to calm down and looked at Harry. "You speak our tongue?"

"I do. What's this oath?"

"What does it matter? My people took an oath to defend this land and protect the Humans of the Speaker – which you apparently are – but that was against other humans. The oath says nothing about other dragons! These dragons are foreign! They don't belong here!"

"They asked me if they could live here to escape others who wish them harm. They don't harm us and we won't harm them. They are my friends and allies. I don't see this as a problem."

"This is OUR land!" the Queen Red retorted.

"Indeed, I understand that. The Reds have lived here since before my people came to these shores and we have always respected that, have we not?"

"You humans have." The Queen Red agreed. "But are we to share...?"

"Share what?" Harry replied. "Do my new friends seek to nest at your rookeries?"

"Well, no. At least they haven't"

"Please!" the Horntail Queen complained. "You're people nest on rocks in the sea exposed to the elements! We prefer caves in the mountains..."

"And not be able to see the sun or breath the sea air?" the Red said. "It's unhealthy, especially for the Younglings!"

"For your people maybe. For my people and especially our young, we prefer caves."

"So neither of your people have any interest in the other's nesting sites," Harry observed. "As I understand it your people hunt at sea far from shore," Harry added speaking to the Red Queen.

"We do. We always have."

"And the closest the Horntails come to your feeding grounds might be the beaches where the seals gather."

"Seals! Nasty things!" the Red Queen added in disgust. "We will eat them, but only if we're starving!"

"As for us," the Horntail said, "fish is hardly a meal and too hard to catch. Seal, while tasty is too rich to eat all the time. More than one or two a year for us adults is just gluttony. We prefer lean, landed game and the Duke here is providing us with more than enough for our needs."

"So your people are also not competing for food," Harry said. "I see no reason why both clans cannot live here as your needs are so different."

"It's still not the point," the Red Queen protested. "We took the Oath! Ages ago we took the Oath to be the protectors of your people, Speaker! And they're telling us they are too?"

"Why is this a problem? Can't both Clans protect us as we have agreed to protect you?"

"But you allow them to be your guard!"

"Have I forbidden your people from any similar honor?"

"Er ... no. But no Speaker before has asked for such."

"I didn't ask this of my Horntail friends either."

"He did not," the Horntail Queen agreed. "We offered it to him. Our sentry is here as a guard and a messenger between the Duke and my people."

"And, while I will not ask this of the Reds," Harry added, "I am sure if the Reds honor requires a similar arrangement, I would have no

objection provided the Reds and the Horntails respect each others' rights and such."

"The Horntails have no objections provided the honors are equal," the Horntail Queen said.

"And I have no objection provided the Reds understand that as Sentry you watch. Many humans come and go and many live here and they are neither food nor threat and I expect them to be ignored unless they are obviously a threat. As no threat can pass through our wards, I expect them to be ignored by the sentry."

"Then what is the sentry for?" the Red asked.

"To impress the humans," the Horntail replied. "Mostly as messenger to the Duke. We may not hunt at sea, but we do fly about and watch for humans who may seek to come here without leave and should we see them, we tell the Duke about them and should the Duke ask it of us, we would deal with them as enemies of the Duke and enemies of our Clan. Bad magical humans live in the Islands to the North so we watch for them should they come. There are also magical humans in the great land to the east and southeast and we watch for them as well. But the ones to the North are the threat."

The Red Queen nodded and was silent for a time. "There are more of us than there are of them," she said referring to the Horntails, "and we are at sea all the time. More eyes would mean less chance that something is missed. We are aware of the North and that the magical Humans there would hunt us and kill us given a chance. This land is our home and we do not wish that. We offer you Sentry as well. But even with one, how would you know if we need to speak?"

The Horntail roared. A jet of fire shot into the sky and all of the windows facing the Pitch rattled.

"They're very quiet otherwise," Harry said. "But that would wake the whole area! And there are people who will find me should any dragon sentry roar."

Cissy and "Little" Laura had now been joined by others as they watched the dragons and Harry. They could not understand what was being said yet as this talent took longer to learn, assuming it could be learned. They were all nervous watching Harry as he seemed to be standing between all of the dragons. But the two Hippogriffs seemed unconcerned with the proceeding and they figured if the dragons were really about to cause problems, the Hippogriffs might appear more nervous, assuming they did not just fly off to get out of the way. When the Horntail roared, they were all momentarily concerned that Harry was about to become an appetizer, but that did not happen. After several minutes, things seemed to calm down. Then, the two largest dragons and most of the others flew off with their clans in different directions. Two dragons remained: a Horntail and a Charenwell Red. Each took a position on opposite sides of the pitch from one another and seemed to lay down and go to sleep. Harry, meanwhile, walked back towards Black House.

"What was that about?" Cissy asked trying to remain calm. After all, watching her "husband" mingle with dragons was not something she had ever wanted to see again and she had not seen the First Task of the Tournament. Some of the others had.

"The Charenwell Reds were a little miffed that the Horntails chose to settle here," Harry said. "Once I explained that the Horntails and the Reds have very different needs for nesting and food, they seemed okay with that. But apparently an ancestor of mine made a deal with the Reds allowing the Reds to be our protectors in exchange for protecting them from humans who might hunt them and they felt I had gone back on the deal. I explained that was not the case. I had only made a similar deal with the Horntails. Then they were miffed about the Horntail Sentry. But we sorted that out. The Reds will have one here as well."

"Why did the Horntail roar like that?" "Little" Laura asked.

"To demonstrate how to call me if there's an immediate need to tell me something."

"Oh."

"Hagrid would be so jealous," Parvati said. She and Padma were among those who had come out to see what was going on.

"And Hermione would have had a heart attack," Padma added. "Merlin knows I almost did!"

MONDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1996 – Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Albus Dumbledore sat in his office contemplating the disaster the summer had become. His whole life had been dedicated to his "Greater Good" and nothing had occurred to challenge his ideas. If anything, the unfolding of events over the last century had reinforced his views. The Magical world, the one he was born to, had fallen into decadence and decay and, left to its own irrational and self serving devices, would die out in a few centuries at the longest. Left to its own devices, all that would be left would be the Muggle Borns, untrained and unprepared for Magic and wholly ignorant of Magic's place in the natural order. If anything, the world into which they were born was worse, set on a destructive course and now possessing the means to destroy everything. Left to their own devices, the Muggles would be the end of the human race, Magical and Muggle and this could not be allowed to happen. The "Greater Good" would see the rise of a ruling elite over the Magicals, born from the most venerable of families with centuries of tradition in their families. This Elite need not be Pureblood, although for now many of the cadre that would one day rule were, but it had to have deep and ancient roots and an undying respect for the natural order. Muggle Borns by nature had no such respect and had proven over time unwilling or unable to learn. They were necessary for the long term viability of magic, but their backgrounds meant they were only useful as breeding stock, hence the need to control them.

The ruling Elites would have their pick of Muggle Born mates. Their healers would set up breeding programs to strengthen magic and wizards would sire scores upon scores of these more magical children in their lifetimes; children who would be removed from their Muggle Born mothers and raised to join the Elite in time. As for Muggle Born wizards, there always would be a need for a working class.



In addition to ruling over the magical world, the Elite would control the Muggle World as well. It was on this point that Dumbledore had his falling out with some of his most promising followers. Both Grindelwald and the young Tom Riddle believed that the Elite could rule directly and could take over by force. Neither saw what Dumbledore did or, if they did, they placed far too much faith in the power of magic. They failed to appreciate the combination that weight in numbers and technology had. Magicals were outnumbered a thousand to one and Muggle technology had always been lethal. A knife or sword or arrow could kill an unsuspecting wizard. Modern weapons in numbers could kill even the best prepared wizard. Rule by conquest would be suicidal. For almost every revolution, there had been at least as bloody a counter-revolution or corresponding repression of such. The Magical World would not survive a counter-revolution aimed against it. Patience was key. Dumbledore did not expect to achieve his utopia in his lifetime. This is what separated him from the other two for, while they were patient in their own way, they expected to rule over all within their time.

Both had made attempts and Dumbledore had opposed both. He felt their ideas were flawed. Only his Greater Good would work. But to achieve his ends, he needed to be trusted and followed by the masses and those two proved to be the perfect foils. In defeating them or holding them back, he gained greater and greater control over their world and, until very recently, was close to having enough such control to begin his plans for its reorganization.

While Riddle and Grindelwald had been his unwitting foils, House Potter and its allies had been his most disconcerting adversaries. Of all the lines in magical Britain, House Potter was among the oldest and, therefore, an ideal House to become a key part of his ruling Elite. Yet the Lords Potter he had dealt with had little interest in such things and, more infuriatingly, actively opposed his every move towards the Greater Good in the Wizengamot. Dumbledore was convinced they were acting not out of enlightened self-interest, but out of a grudge between his family and theirs dating back centuries. Since they stood in his way, they had to be removed although that was easier said than done.

In 1979, Dumbledore had gotten lucky. Once of his operatives had managed to kill Lord Charlus and his wife in Diagon Alley and succeeded in making it look like the work of Riddle and his band of brain dead sheep. Dumbledore knew the line was ripe for termination. Charles Potter had but one son – James and James had recently married a Muggle Born, one whom Dumbledore had conditioned for just such a role although the girl had resisted his subtle efforts for years. She thought the world of Dumbledore and trusted him implicitly, but she had little regard for the future Lord Potter. Dumbledore believed she should marry. It had been simple enough. Dumbledore placed her on the Auction Block and made sure she knew about it by leaving a copy of the catalog where the curious teenaged girl would find it and then ensuring she would find out about Consorts and the potential value of marrying into an Ancient and Noble House. He knew the girl had real feelings for the future Lord, but was too prideful to give in to her feelings absent a little push.

The rest of his plan for House Potter seemed to fall into place. Charles Potter was far less active than his father had been and it did not take much for Dumbledore to convince Lily that she, her new husband and their unborn child were in danger and only he, the Great Albus Dumbledore could keep them safe. He placed the future of House Potter into what was really and exposed location, lulled them into a false sense of security, and then pointed Riddle at them. Riddle might be a genius about magic, but he was easy to manipulate. It should have been over that night. House Potter should have been destroyed for good, or at least it would be once Charles Potter passed on in time, after all Charles's wife was beyond child bearing age and as she was a Consort, it was inconceivable that Charles might sire another child by another woman. To this day, Dumbledore was not certain exactly what had gone wrong. The boy had lived. True, the toddler was far more magically powerful than average. But no one had survived the Killing Curse. More disconcerting was the discovery that the Potters had another child.

Getting rid of the girl had proven easy. She was placed for adoption with Dumbledore as her magical guardian and when the time came he would sell her off as a Concubine destroying her connection with House Potter forever. The boy's survival, while a setback, was turned into an opportunity. Dumbledore knew that his Greater Good would

not survive him without an heir and he was not about to sully himself with rutting like an animal to sire one. But the boy? He knew naming the boy as his heir would cause problems, but should he control the boy, he could control who the boy mated with and should the boy's mate come from an inner circle member, then the boy's son could be raised to become the rightful heir to the Greater Good. That son would have the heritage of House Potter needed to rule under this system and the upbringing to rule, especially if the father was dead.

Everything was moving slowly but steadily towards this end until just a few months ago. Now the plans for House Potter were well and truly shattered. The bride of choice was now the boy's slave. The boy had married a head strong Muggle Born and was arguably being corrupted by her ideas. But the boy was never integral to Dumbledore's plans, just an opportunity which had presented itself. Then the boy began to act. In two short months, he had crippled magical Britain and set the Greater Good back decades or more. The Ministry and Wizengamot were paralyzed by the lack of quorum. Riddle and his followers had been decimated and bankrupted meaning it might be years before that threat could galvanize their world and bring them rallying to Dumbledore. A rogue in the Ministry had attempted to end it and that had proven a political disaster for the Ministry. It was still too early to foresee the full extent of the disaster and what was worse there was nothing Dumbledore could really do about it. Dumbledore had hoped that the fact that the boy had gunned down the rogue and two of her Death Eater contacts in front of a witness and just a few yards from the office of the Minister of Magic would galvanize the public. So far that had not happened. Quite the opposite as, despite the condemnation for the actions in the press, it seemed the general public supported the action regardless of the fact that it would lead anyone else to a dementor's kiss.

But the Greater Good did not come into being overnight. Dumbledore had spent years developing his ideas, then his strategies, then his tactics and it would not do to act rashly for what seemed to be a minor setback in the grand scheme of things. Time was something he had. Riddle had his crude horcuxes, an inefficient and almost always ineffective means of delaying the inevitable. There were other ways to extend a lifetime if such extension was necessary for the Greater Good and ways that would not ruin the wizard who employed them.

For now, the demands of the mundane demanded the man's attention.

Dumbledore and come to Hogwarts as a professor to begin the long process of building a ruling elite. He had risen to Headmaster and had held that post longer than anyone in recent memory to continue that process. But as Headmaster, he still had a school to run. Most of the students who passed through would never be a part of his planned elite, but they all had to be educated anyway. As strictly the Headmaster, Dumbledore had staffing issues that needed to be addressed. After all, he was about three weeks away from the start of the next term.

That he had lost his Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher was no surprise. For over thirty years this had proven to be a temporary position. The rumor was it was cursed. Perhaps, but if it was Dumbledore made no effort to break the curse. There were advantages to the revolving door that was this position. He had already decided to allow Severus Snape to finally take this position, one the man had coveted ever since Dumbledore had first hired him. That decision had been made last year as both yet another means of controlling the boy and raising his pet Death Eater in the eyes of Riddle and he could not change that now. He had managed to coerce Horace Slughorn out of retirement to take over Potions and had assumed that would be the end of his staffing problems.

Then McGonagall retired. She had threatened to each of the last five years, but he had always managed to magically alter her mind to keep her where she was. This year, she retired and left before he could stop her and he was now in need of a new Transfiguration Professor, a new Head of Gryffindor House and a Deputy Headmaster or Headmistress. For his Deputy, Snape was not an option. Dumbledore had called in too many favors to keep the man out of Azkaban and keep him at Hogwarts. Dumbledore knew what happened in Slytherin House and knew Snape would not last a day without protection. Were he to try to elevate Snape to Deputy Headmaster, whatever benefits to his struggle against Riddle would be short lived. Snape would be dead within weeks. Before McGonagall, Slughorn had been Deputy which was among the

reasons why he retired and he refused to come back if that job was in his future.

By seniority, Flitwick was the obvious choice. However Flitwick's heritage was against him. Moreover, he had just retired as well only days ago. That Flitwick had retired was hardly a surprise. He had been on staff for nearly sixty years and had risen as far as he could hope to within the educational community. That he had not told Albus of his plans well in advance as most did had been a surprise. By custom, retiring staff informed the Headmaster months in advance so that he would have time to hire a competent replacement. Two of his senior staff had left without notice to him and at a time when he would be hard pressed to find a suitable, long term replacement.

True, he could return to teaching Transfiguration. But unless he had a Deputy as adept at administration as Minerva had been, he could not afford to teach, run the school, deal with the Board of Governors and his remaining responsibilities within the magical government, much less make any advances on his Greater Good. Despite his frequent arguments with Minerva over the years (almost always about Severus and, more recently about the Potter boy) she freed him up to pursue his other responsibilities. It had incensed him to no end to learn in the end and for all of this time that she had been a spy for House Potter and probably had a hand in getting the boy out from under his control. But even as a spy, she had been irreplaceable as his Deputy.

The next in line for the position was Pomona Sprout. She was the next most senior with thirty-five years on staff and was a Pureblood who had served as Head of Hufflepuff House for years. With Snape not an option and his other two heads gone, she was his only choice. He knew it would not be like before. Sprout was far more vocal about Snape than Minerva had been and she was public about it. Should she learn about the man's predations and what went on in that house, there would be no telling how disruptive that would be. That and Dumbledore did not think she had a fraction of the administrative skills of her predecessor, but there was little choice. The Deputy post would fall to her. Head of Gryffindor would fall to Professor Vector who taught Runes. He would have preferred a professor in one of the core courses, but the Head had to be from that House and the Astronomy Professor was a Slytherin. Hagrid had seniority, but

Dumbledore was reluctant to name him as Head. After all, many of the current students were here when he was still just a games keeper and most knew of his half-giant heritage.

His best leads on potential Charms Professors were former Hufflepuffs. This meant he had no choice but to name the Arithmancy professor as Head of Ravenclaw and this was another professor who he was reluctant to elevate as she was also a vocal critic of both Snape and many of Dumbledore's decisions. But it couldn't be helped.

Finally, there was one last position suddenly vacated. He needed a new Matron. Poppy had left without so much as a goodbye just days ago as well. Dumbledore was convinced that the Ministry's botched attack against Potter was a factor in Flitwick and Pomfrey's sudden departures and was incensed that the boy had managed to accumulate such a loyal following, but there was nothing he could do about it now. Fortunately, there were several young Healers who might jump at the chance and the salary.

There was a knock at the door to the office. This was the summer so the gargoyle that sealed the access to the stairs to the office was absent. That particular barrier was designed to keep students out, not staff.

"Enter," Dumbledore said.

Hagrid entered and appeared to be crying. For a moment Dumbledore wondered if the recent resignations were the cause. While Hagrid had proven exceedingly and almost annoyingly loyal to Dumbledore over the years, no doubt for a small kindness when the lad had been expelled that Dumbledore still viewed as a moment of unnecessary weakness on his part, the half-giant considered McGonagall, Flitwick and Pomfrey his friends, something that was not the case between him and the revered and almost worshiped Headmaster.

"Something seems to be bothering you Hagrid?"

The gentle giant of a man nodded. "'t's Grawp."

"Excuse me?"

"Grawp! E's me brother. Jus' a lad 'e is fer 'is kind. Brought 'im back with me from the east when you sent us to parlay wi' 'is kind. 'Is mum an' my Mum was the same."

"I see," which explained the cryptic complaints he had heard from the Centaurs in the forest. "And what is the matter with him?" Dumbledore tried to hide his annoyance. Only Hagrid could be foolish enough to bring a Giant to a place populated with children ten months out of the year. And Hagrid, as loyal as he may be, never told Dumbledore about some of his more questionable pets such as Acromantulas, his illegal breeding experiment that produced the one of a kind and now fortunately extinct Blast Ended Screwt, Fluffy or his dragon until they proved to be a problem. Why would Hagrid bother to tell him about a Giant until now?

""E's gone! Run off! 'E says there be evil 'ere and wants nothing ter do with it an' his people call to arms to fight an' e's off!"

"I see. Well, one lone giant should not give the folks at Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures too much difficulty, although it does suggest Voldemort has turned them against us..."

"You wouldn'!"

"Excuse me?"

"You wouldn' set them butchers after 'im! 'E's my brother!"

"Hagird, if he's gone rogue it's out of my hands."

""E's no rogue! I've been trainin' 'im up! He talks an' all that! Well, he's beginin' t' at least."

"Hagrid, we cannot have a giant walking about..."

""E's all th' family I got, Sir! You can't set them murders after 'im! You can't!"

"Hagrid..."

"I'll find 'im! I'll find 'im, keep 'im outa trouble! 'E was no trouble t'all comin' 'ere. I'll find 'im! Jus' keep 'em butchers away!"

"Hagrid, with the staff changes I need you here. The students need you."

"Nah! Mos' don't like me much. I won' be missed now that 'Arry's gone. Tis a family matter, Sir. If you won't grant me leave to find 'im, then I 'ave no choice but to resign!"

There was nothing Dumbledore could do. Had it been any other member of the faculty aside from the ghost who taught history, he would simply modify the man's memory and motivations. Not even Severus could withstand such a modification. But Hagrid's half giant blood rendered him immune to such subtle magic.

"Very well then. You are on indefinite leave of absence effective immediately."

"Thank you, Professor Dumbledore, Sir!" Hagrid smiled and left the office.

Of all the staff losses, Hagrid was the most replaceable. Professor Grubby-Plank was more than willing to teach the class and, to be honest, was better at it. The only reason Hagrid had the job in the first place was because of the man's relationship with the now absent Potter boy. Were it not for the fact that Hagrid had other uses and was loyal to Dumbledore to a fault, he would have accepted the man's resignation. But the half giant had such other values, or so he thought, hence the leave of absence and keeping the man on Dumbledore's leash.

MONDAY, AUGUST 12th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

For Robert Granger, thus far his introduction to the "most magical country on Earth" had been a bit of a disappointment. When such words were used, he almost expected an exaggerated version of Diagon Alley; a place filled with oddly dressed people brandishing



magic as if it were an everyday happening which, in such place as Diagon Alley it was. If the whole country was supposed to be like that and was also supposed to be open about it without fear or concern about Muggle like him knowing, he expected broomsticks and goodness knows what all. Instead, he had flown on a very normal looking and behaving commuter plane, arrived at an almost normal looking airport, traveled on a very normal looking and behaving bus through a modern, if empty small city and an older city that reminded him of places he and his family had visited in France, driven through fields, pastures and vineyards, all with barely a hint of any magic at all. There were no oddly dressed people in the streets or wands waving about or brooms flying in the air, at least none that he could see. The only hint of magic were a few of the shops they passed on High Street in Pottersport and a couple of others in Potters Vineyard that looked like they sold magical stuff. But compared to Diagon Alley, they seemed subdued. People here rode bicycles and drove cars. They passed lorries and saw tractors in some of the fields. They arrived at a Hotel that any Muggle would feel comfortable with. It had electricity, telephones, television and other conveniences that according to his daughter did not exist in Magical Britain. The only clue that this place was magical was that magic was talked about openly.

That is until now. Once again they were on the bus, this time travelling a much shorter distance from their hotel to where their daughter was living. Along the way they again passed through The Manors, this time their "tour guide" pointed out the houses where the passengers would live once their household goods arrived from Britain. The Bells, Perks and the Plumbers were on the bus and were told they could expect their belongings to arrive within a week, ten days at the most. For Robert and Rose, the Greengrasses and the Patils, their stuff was already here and they could move in at their leisure. The house set aside from Robert and Rose was even larger than the one they had left back in Britain and they were told that until recently it had been one of the "Estate" guest houses.

It was when the bus reached the large elliptical lawn bordered by the wide drive with what looked like a palace at the far end and extending along either side that the magic of this place became obvious.

"Bloody hell!" a voice said. "That's a dragon, that is!"

Robert looked and saw a large, red, lizard looking thing lying on the lawn stretching immense, bat like wings. It certainly looked like what he imagined a dragon to look like.

"I'll have to ask about that," Katie Bell said. "The Manors is watched over by Hungarian Horntails and, unless I am mistaken, that's one of our Charenwell Reds. Never seen one this far from the sea before. Perhaps it's just resting. No worries. So long as you mean them no harm and are not near their nests, they're said to be fairly docile. That's not to say tame. They're not. But at least they don't see humans as a meal or snack.

"On the left is Longbottom House," she continued as if a dragon up close was nothing. "It is the home for House Longbottom, hence the name. The House relocated here from their ancestral estate in Lancashire due to the Troubles. Across the way is House Black, which is an extension of the primary Manor House and is where Sally-Anne and Connie live. Aside from Hermione, the rest of us live there for now as well while the upper floors of Potter Manor are being renovated.

"Another dragon?" a voice asked.

Robert now saw a much larger, black dragon sleeping on the lawn.

"That's our Horntail Sentry," Katie said. "The Duke has an understanding with the Horntail Flock or Clan which has recently settled in our mountains to the east of here. The dragon watches over us and serves as a messenger between the Duke and the Queen of their clan."

"They can talk?" Robert asked.

"In their own fashion," Katie replied. "The Duke understands them and they the Duke. To me, it's all a bunch of hissing noises. But make no mistake. Dragons are highly intelligent and, at least according to the Duke, can be quite the chatterboxes when they choose to be. The Duke is hoping a few of us will learn their language so that when they

decide to chat our ears off, one of us will have the time to listen. We will be disembarking here and entering the manor proper where you will be taken to meet with your family members. For you youngsters, while our dragon friends and the Hippogriffs are not about to eat you, they are not tame so don't think they will let you pet them without taking offense."

Robert looked over the other side and saw what looked like two huge birds of prey with the hind end of a horse rather than tail feathers. They looked regal and predatory at the same time. He reached a conclusion. Charenwell did not flaunt magic like he remembered they did in Diagon Alley, but when they did display it, it was impressive and indisputable. Any lingering doubt was dispelled when they passed through the huge doors to the Manor into the entry foyer that was larger than many small homes and, through a glass panned wall, looked into the tropical Conservatory beyond. Waiting for them were eight beings the likes of which not even the magicals seemed to have known. Katie Bell led her family into the rest of the manor after explaining.

"These are High Elves or Eldar," she said. "They are as elves were truly meant to be and not the simpering abominations our magical cousins made them become. They are employees of the Manor and in all respects considered family by all of us and will be treated accordingly. Any disrespect to them is considered disrespect of their families. They will escort you to where you will meet your daughters." The term daughters had been used for simplicity. After all, for a family like the Grants, Mallory was a daughter, sister, sister-in-law and aunt. It was just easier to refer to them all as daughters.

"Mr. and Mrs. Granger?" a voice asked. Robert looked and saw a female elf before them. She was shorter than they were but not by much. She had large eyes when compared with a human but not overly so and delicately pointed ears poked out slightly from her golden hair. If she was an employee or servant, she could only be described as elegant. "My name is Winky and I am your Hermione's handmaiden and assistant. If you'll follow me please?"

They were led through the elegant "Manor," although both Grangers felt the term "Palace" might be more appropriate. Finally, they passed

through a large pair of double doors and into an immense space beyond. In their immediate front was a seating area, but the walls were lined with books on two separate levels and off to their left they saw rows and rows of bookcases. Rose almost instinctively began to gravitate towards the books.

"Hermione would like you to sit here and wait," Winky said indicating a small couch by a huge fireplace that faced two high back elegant leather chairs. A table was in front of the couch and on it was a tea service. "Hermione has told me that Mistress Rose would lose herself in our library given half the chance..."

Robert could only laugh at that. "She wouldn't come out for weeks."

"Robert!" Rose protested as she sat next to him on the couch as the elf maiden poured each a cup of tea.

"I am sure she will have plenty of opportunities to enjoy this library," Winky said. "It is said to be one of the largest private libraries in the world. There are said to be manuscripts, scrolls and codexes that are the only surviving copies in existence. But there're in special storage. When you have the time, our Librarian William will be more than willing to show you around."

"Thank you," Rose said nervously and then turned as she saw movement out of the corner of her eye. A young woman with chestnut brown hair had entered. She wore an elegant, yet simple sapphire blue gown and more diamonds than Rose had ever seen outside of a jewelry store. It took Rose a moment to recognize her for she had never saw the young woman so well put together nor that hair so well coifed. "Hermione?"

Robert looked up and was equally stunned.

"Hello Mum and Dad," she said. The voice was that of their daughter. She walked over and gave them a hug before sitting in one of the chairs opposite them. As she picked up her own cup of tea she asked: "Did you have a pleasant trip?"

"Yes we did," Robert said regaining his composure, "but I don't think we were invited here to exchange pleasantries."

"No," Hermione agreed becoming more serious and far more grown up than Robert wanted to admit. "It is obvious that some things have happened this summer while the two of you were away; things which need explaining."

"You're Harry's Consort, I take it?" Rose asked.

Hermione nodded. "We bonded June 23rd although we did not learn of the full implications of the bond until the next day."

"And how was this accomplished?" Robert asked. "As I understand it that bond means you're married. You're not even seventeen yet!"

"Robert!" Rose began. "I'm not sure you want to know the how and as for the age, that bond has no minimum calendar age. All that is necessary is the right emotional state, a strong enough relationship and the ability to physically start a family and..."

"How do you know this?"

"Because Hermione sent me a book about these bonds. She told me not to show it to you until now and it was obvious to me why she did practically from the introduction. The Consort Bond couples two forms of powerful magic: one is an oath offered and accepted by both. It cannot be faked, meaning they both must mean it and believe it. In that oath they pledge themselves to each other for life and if it takes hold, that's exactly what happens. Divorce is not possible not because law and custom forbid it but because the relationship will only get stronger over time. The bonding is completed by a ritual of trust, one which requires willing acts of physical intimacy..."

"What kind of acts?" Robert asked.

"The most powerful kind," Rose said. "Sex."

Robert could not understand why he didn't lose it right there. Then again, Hermione was not about to tell him about the mild calming

draught in his tea. "I guess that explains why we were not invited," was all he could say in reply.

"The bondings are that way," Hermione said calmly. "However, custom does not mean that a wedding ceremony for family and friends is unnecessary. If you want, that can happen and you can walk me down the aisle. We have dates available beginning a week from next Saturday."

"You're trying to change the subject!" Robert said. "You two promised not to get married the next day!"

"Well, it was over twenty-six hours from the time of that promise to the completion of the bonding," Hermione said, "and another several hours before we knew for certain we had bonded."

"Semantics!"

Hermione shrugged. "I have no regrets."

"Can he support you?"

"That was a dumb question!" Rose said. "They said this was Potter Manor! Does it look like he's a pauper?"

"This is his ancestral home," Hermione agreed. "And if you need more, consider this: Since we arrived here, he's built Jamestown, The Manors, Black House and Longbottom House all out of his own pocket. Cost about a half billion quid and he still will have more money at year's end than when it began."

"Bloody hell!" Robert said. Rose was too stunned to correct his language.

"In case you missed it, Harry is now Lord Sir Harry James Potter, Duke of Charenwell, Count of Darby, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table and so on and so forth. He is Head of State of the Duchy of Charenwell and a Peer of the

Realm back in Britain. Course he knew none of this until after we arrived here, but there you go."

"And what does that make you?"

"Aside from his Wife and Consort, it makes me Lady Dame Hermione Jane Potter, Duchess of Charenwell, Royal Order of the Round Table."

"What's this Royal Order stuff?" Rose asked.

"Well, as you know there's all sorts of Knights of the Bath. Her Majesty can bestow that, but the P.M. can recommend it and by custom Her Majesty will bestow it. She retains absolute control over three orders of Knighthood, but those orders are limited to twenty-four members and a new one can only be elevated when a vacancy opens, usually upon the death of a member. Those Orders are the Knights of the Garter for England, the Knights of the Thistle for Scotland and the Knights of the Round Table for those of us who are magical. Harry and I and some others were invested in the Order earlier this summer." She then described her summer, at least her summer as Consort and Duchess, but for now without mentioning the Concubines although she knew that was coming. What she did mention, however, was finding Harry's long lost sister, the research she had been doing, the Dragons, the Muggle Born Evacuation, Her Majesty's visit, the visit of the Prime Minister, the arrival of the Military Advisory Group and her own Air Force training.

"Doesn't sound like much of a holiday," Rose noted.

"Oh I don't know. Harry aside, I've never had a summer like this."

"I noticed you've said nothing about Concubines," Robert said. "Your former professor spoke about them at length. Surely, they were not discussed without reason."

Hermione nodded. She placed a photograph before her parents. It was one of Minerva from Harry's Investiture. "Minerva," she said. "Her father died when she was a girl. Her magical guardian sold her at auction in 1943 when she was only fifteen. She was acquired by

Charlus Potter, then Heir Apparent and later Duke of Charenwell. That was Harry's Great Grandfather. She became what we call a Second Stage Concubine which precludes the abuses that often happen back home, but requires her to be bonded to a house. When Charlus was murdered in '79, she became the Concubine of his son Charles. Charles and his Consort both died in 1988. Minerva remained bound to House Potter and upon Harry attaining his majority, he had to either bond with her or let her go. Had he done the latter, it would have been a death sentence. What was he to do? Let her die?

"When I learned about Concubines and that Harry had inherited Minerva and what would happen if she were let go, I made it clear what I thought of that! I will not say I am in favor of that bond, but I'd be damned if I had a hand in ruining a life! And if I exercised my prerogative as Consort to prevent Harry from accepting her as his bonded, I would have become a killer as sure as I would have had I shot her dead! I would rather be a party to that bonding and ensure she has a life than to cast her out and know I ended her life decades before her time! Each of the Concubines' stories are different, but they all have one thing in common. They had no choice in their life, but we did and for us that choice was to either let them bond with Harry and have a life or be let go and sentenced to hell on this earth and premature death. If there was a third choice, one which would allow them the life they all deserve without the bond, we would have taken it. But once your interest is sold, there is no real third option."

"How many?" Rose asked.

"Minerva is House Potter's Matron. She is the longest tenured Concubine in the House and most accomplished witch. As Consort, I am I guess higher in the pecking order, but I'd be a fool not to look up to her. Since bonding, she retired from Hogwarts and is now head of our government's Educational Development Board tasked with opening our own magical school system." She then placed several other photographs on the table. First was Astoria Greengrass, also from the Investiture. Next were Stacey Campbell and Ginny Weasley from the Queen's State Visit. She explained how each of them came to become one of Harry's girls. They were followed by Laura Oliver and Rhonda Lester and she explained the confiscations in detail.



They were followed by Katie Bell, Padma Patil, Sally-Anne Perks, Erin Sullivan and Eleanor Bromstone. With them, she explained the Muggle Born Auction and how Harry broke the bank buying all the first time girls. Last but not least was Gabrielle, who while not a Concubine, would one day become a wife through her unique bond and the Coven which she also explained.

"Isn't thirteen an unlucky number?" Rose asked.

"Superstition," Hermione huffed. "After the number seven, it is the second most powerful magical number. It is believed unlucky only because of what happened in France on Friday, October 13th, 1307 when the King at the suggestion of the Pope arrested the Knights Templar for all sorts of alleged crimes including sorcery but really because he owed them more money than he had any intent on paying."

"Thirteen wives? A ruddy Harem?" Robert said. "Don't know whether to throttle him or pity him!"

"There's more," Hermione said.

"Oh?"

Hermione nodded. As she did, another young woman, one who was not in any of the photographs sat down in the chair next to Hermione. She was wearing an emerald green dress and diamonds as well. Her long, blonde hair seemed to spill over her shoulders in a golden cascade.

"This is my best friend Luna," Hermione said. "I know I mentioned her frequently in my letters the last couple of years..."

The elder Grangers nodded.

"She's also Lady Dame Luna Black, Countess of Darby, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table. She is Harry's second Consort. As Head of two lines with rights of separate inheritance, by law, custom and magic, Harry can maintain two separate families and Luna here

is the Consort of Harry as Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black."

"And what do your parents think of all this?" Robert began.

Luna's lip began to tremble and tears leaked from her eyes.

"You may not have know," Hermione scolded, "but that was uncalled for! Her mother died in front of her when she was nine and her father was murdered this past July 1st! She would have been as well if our people hadn't found her and brought her here!"

"I didn't know. Sorry," Robert said meekly as his wife glared at him.

"There is a war back home! Had we remained in England, we'd be dead! People we know have already died and more will before this is over! Why do you think you've been recalled to service?"

"You know about that?" Robert asked.

Hermione nodded. "I was present when the decision was made by Major General Churchill and his staff – well, at least when it was announced." She then proceeded to place more photographs before her parents. This time it was House Black beginning with Dora and ending with Cathy. She made sure to point out there were two sets of sisters bound to Harry and that aside from their last name, as a family and Coven, there was no distinction between the two Houses.

"Twenty-six? And many of them are so young?" Rose said.

"Obviously not too young to be sold off to become some wizard's plaything," Hermione said. "That's usually what happens. Of the ladies in our family who were Concubines before they came to us, only Minerva and Dora avoided being little more than a prostitute. Had Luna and I not become Consorts that was what would have happened to us. I was slated to be sold this summer! Only by bonding with Harry did I avoid that!"

"I'm sure he would have bought you if he had to," Luna said.

"That's not the point!" Robert replied. "None of this should have been necessary!"

"I agree," Luna replied. "But it was and what has happened to us was for the best under the circumstances."

"What a sick society!"

"I can assure you Charenwell is nothing like that," Hermione began.

"I meant Britain! And I can't believe I just said that."

"Magical Britain is a sick society," Hermione agreed. "And it has been for a long time but there was little or nothing that could be done about it. But that sick society is now a threat to the non-magical side and Her Majesty's government is not going to sit back and watch things happen. We bonded as we did and brought in others to bond as they did because it was the best we could do right now and to wait would have ruined countless lives. But to ensure that this sort of thing stops for good..."

"Ah," Luna said, "it won't stop completely. Life Debts and Debts of Honor and all. But they are rare enough. Less than one in a thousand witches might fall victim to that magic as opposed to around one in three or more as things now stand."

"... that society must end for the sake of future generations of children, the victims and their families. Her Majesty asked us to end the madness. We're not ready, but we will be."

At that moment, a third person joined them. It was Harry. For some reason, Robert no longer felt inclined to kill the young lad.

"I seem to recall you promised us you two wouldn't get married the next day," Robert said.

"Arguably, we didn't," Harry began.

"I'm not buying the twenty-six hours later bit Hermione through out!"

"Um ... well actually... I was going to say we bonded which made her my wife and me her husband but I was raised Muggle and married implies a wedding and we haven't had one yet. Then again, you also said we shouldn't put the cart before the horse and if we're not married then we did but if our bonding was getting married then we didn't and..."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Robert began.

"Hermione?" Rose asked. "Are you...?"

Hermione nodded. "I did have my period after the bonding, but yes."

"What?" Robert asked not wanting to believe this line of conversation.

"Your grandson and granddaughter should be here by early April," Hermione continued.

"You're pregnant?" Rose and Robert asked.

"That kind of thing happens to married people," Luna said.

"Twins?" Rose asked.

"And that's not uncommon with powerful, magical bonds," Luna added. "Although it does not mean she'll always have twins. I'm fairly certain I'll find out the same thing next week."

"You too?"

Luna nodded. "But it's too early for magic to tell what I'm having."

"How many others?" Robert asked.

"Oh, well so far, it's Hermione, me, Minerva, Dora, Mallory, Daphne, Stacey, Karen and Ginny. Oh, and Katie, Rhonda, Connie, Padma, Parvati and Cissy will probably be that way soon. Later this fall we can probably add Tabatha, Fiona, Laura (the older one), Sally-Anne, Kathryn, Erin and maybe Astoria as well."

"Astoria?" Harry asked.

"She turns of that age in November," Luna said.

"Although she says she'll wait 'til early next year," Hermione added.

"Twenty-two pregnant women?" Robert said in shock. "How do you find the time?"

"Hermione and her schedules and the use of a Time Turner," Harry said. "My ladies aside, I don't have time in one day to do all that I need to so instead of one day, I get three."

"So you'll die three times faster?"

"Doesn't work that way," Harry said. "So long as my magic is stable, I won't age any faster. Useful thing that time turner for that's how I knew it was safe to come in here."

"Oh?"

"This is my third time through Monday," Harry said. "Had you tried to kill me or something, I would have known about it two days ago for me."

"Why kill you?" Robert quipped. "With twenty-six wives, twenty-two who are or will be pregnant, I think they'll do a far better job of it than I can. All I have to do is sit back and watch you squirm!" he added with a laugh.

"Well," Harry frowned, "on that pleasant note, I'm here to ask you to dine with us and all the other families where you can sit with my other new in-laws and take bets on the nature and timing of my demise, which I also know the lot of you will do although now I don't know if you would have done that had I kept my mouth shut. Sometimes time is a real pain!"

## CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX: ABOUT THE EVACUATION.

The initial meetings with the parents had gone rather well, although since he received no dire warnings his first time through Monday when he went to bed with Hermione and Minerva, he figured they had, or at least it had not gone totally pear shaped. Hermione, while quiet about that evening, did not seem nor act upset which would have warned him that it had not gone well. As all the bondings were done, Monday was a reset to the new sleeping schedule that would see Harry turning time three times a day, seven days a week instead of five. This was done to allow him more time for his ladies, although only one of him would be doing Sunday Brunch at Martha's.

The initial meetings had been almost as Cissy had predicted. The Greengrasses had not even needed a calming draught and were very pleased with their daughters' new situation if a little reluctant about the size of the new family. As far as they were concerned, Harry had more than held up his side of the bargain by allowing his daughters to allow their bonds to fully mature. The only wrinkle were Daphne and Astoria's three younger sisters all of whom now seemed to want either a Harry under the tree for Christmas or wanted to know how they could become his concubine too. The Bromstones were pleased with how this had worked out for Eleanor as well and were glad that Harry was younger, although they had hoped he might be just a little older. They were even more pleased that they only had to spend two days worrying about their daughter before being reunited. The Patils had no problem with Harry but were infuriated that the British magicals would do this without their consent. Mr. Patil made it clear that if he could not join the Charenwell armed forces to avenge his daughters, then he wanted a job that made weapons or some such that would do the same thing. Harry was not certain if the man was serious about that or not.

As Cissy predicted, the Grant family seemed thrilled not just to have her daughter back, but at how well she had done for herself and that did not mean bonding with Harry but her accomplishments as a Healer and Doctor. They seemed pleased about Harry in general, but expressed concern about his youth. After all, Harry was only two months older than Mallory's oldest niece and Mallory's mother was a bit worried about their age difference. "Talk about your May-

December romances," she had said. She calmed down a little when Mallory pointed out that as a witch, her life expectancy was at least 120 which meant she and Harry would be together for at least eighty years that meant their great-grandkids might well be grown up and having children during their life together. One of the Grants did ask whether their daughters were at risk of becoming concubines should they ever return to Britain.

"Legally, no," Harry said. "First of all, no Charenwell citizen may sell another Charenwell resident or bind them against their will. Our custom and law restricts the purchase of concubines to the Duke, but they must be purchased overseas. As for returning to Britain, if you return as a Charenwell citizen, you are under the protection of both International Law and House Potter. The Brits have already shown they have little respect for the former, but their own laws force them to respect the latter as House Potter is one of their most Ancient of lines."

What Harry now believed saved him from hostility from the Grants was the fact that they had believed that Mallory was dead. The Grants even held a memorial service for her about twenty years ago and to find her alive and well was a miracle in their eyes particularly when they realized that Mallory's younger sister Michelle may well have wound up in the same situation and it seemed only chance spared the woman. Michelle had married when she was twenty-two meaning for seven years whoever her magical guardian was could have sold her off as well.

The Campbells were another matter. They seemed to accept Harry, but not the reasons why any of this was necessary in the first place. They had lost their daughter for three years to some sick pervert where she was less than a whore. They did not blame Harry directly, but clearly wondered what sort of society could do that to a woman of any age, much less one who was only fourteen at the time. They had tried to find out from the magical authorities what had become of their daughter and had gotten nowhere and now, it seemed, they knew why. The British Magical bastards did not care what happened to Muggle Born witches and certainly could care less what their Muggle families thought. It was no wonder there were these Death Eaters. In non-magical Britain, the security forces would have taken the Death

Eaters out the moment they raised their sick little heads. The Magicals seemed to look the other way. The Campbells were glad to be shot of the place especially as they had a younger daughter Amy who was only twelve and they certainly did not want her to go through what her big sister had to suffer. As for Harry, they wondered why he had not been able to save Stacey sooner, why he had not been her first if this mess was unavoidable. Harry pointed out that first off he was only around twelve at the time Stacey was first bound and even if that was not a factor, he was not yet emancipated.

Once the calming draught wore off, Robert Granger became very quiet. Rose seemed okay, but was clearly upset that "things got so out of hand" meaning that Hermione was now part of a Harem. Later, Hermione told Harry that it would take time for them to fully accept what was going on. This sort of thing was unheard of in the non-magical world, at least in the West. And as it was all magical in nature, it would take time for her both to explain this to her parents and for them to fully understand. They seemed to understand why it was necessary, but deep down they wished someone else had been involved and that if their daughter had to marry this young, it would not have been a part of something like this. She confessed she was not yet ready to tell the Grangers about her sleeping arrangements, at least those that involved Harry and she certainly was not going to tell them about her arrangements that did not involve Harry, even though such arrangements were discussed in the book on Bonds. It would take time, she said, but they were at least trying to accept this new life their daughter had chosen. It helped them a little to realize that unlike most every other witch, Hermione had chosen this and had been a major reason why this had happened and that she chose this not because it was the right thing for her, but because it was the right thing for others. Grudgingly, the older Grangers realized she was the kind of person they had hoped to raise, but that did not completely excuse her choice to enter into such an unusual situation even if it might have been the right thing to do for the others.

Harry was forced to wonder about the Bells. More particularly, he wondered whether the mild calming draught had worn off at all. They both reminded him of what Hermione later described as an inverse Arthur Weasley. It was Arthur who as a wizard found Muggles "fascinating" and whenever amongst them resembled a child in the



world's largest toy store. Katie's parents were the same way about magic. Katie had said her parent were a bit odd even by Muggle standards. Even before they learned that Katie was a real witch, they were into the idea of magic. They spent holidays in Wales "looking for Merlin." There was a town in Lancashire that proclaimed itself to the Muggles as the most magical in Britain and was proud of it and had there been any decent jobs, the Bells would have moved there. The older Bells believed they were descended from Druids which was possible but could not be proven. Every year they went to Stonehenge for the Summer Solstice even though that ancient site predated druidic culture by a thousand years or more. The only thing they seemed disappointed about was there was not more magic here. Since Katie was a witch and being a part of a Coven was a good thing for a witch and Katie had been able to participate in real druidic rituals, they were thrilled for their daughter. If anything, they were disappointed for their younger daughter Laura who was eleven and now would not be going to Hogwarts and would live without any guarantee that she too could participate in such rituals and join a proper coven.

Mr. Perks, who was a solicitor back in Britain, began threatening to bring suit against Harry for wrongful imprisonment and seduction, not to mention any claims he could bring for enslaving his daughter. Harry hoped it was a bluff and fortunately Cissy was there to prove it was just that.

"In and ideal world," Cissy began, "the person who you could sue would be the Magical Guardian who sold your daughter. Because of the magic that was involved, once she was sold she had to be bound lest she be sold again and again. Sooner or later someone would bind her and, given the vile customs in Britain, your daughter would wind up entertaining wizards on her back! Had anyone else bought her, you would never see her again and would never know what happened to her and never have had any opportunity to protect her younger sister from just such a fate! The Magical Guardian sold your daughter and scores of other – perhaps hundreds or even thousands over the years – without so much as an afterthought or any concern about where she might wind up and what her life might become and – Mr. Perks – I suggest you talk to five of the other young ladies here

tonight who will tell you what would have happened had Harry not intervened on your daughter's behalf!

"Harry is not the problem, he is the solution to that problem. Your daughter will be allowed to continue her education as far as her ambitions and abilities will allow. If she wants a career – to make a name for herself in her own right, she will be supported in those endeavors. If she wants a family – children and all – that is her right to claim as well. As a Muggle Born witch in Britain, even if she had not been auctioned off like a piece of furniture, her future was limited. Because she was auctioned off, had Harry not intervened, she would have been condemned to a short, horrible life in all likelihood. Harry is not the problem. Magical Britain is the problem and it has only just begun to pay for what it is and what it has done to these and countless other young women over the ages."

As Mr. Perks seemed unconvinced, in addition to being promised access to the relevant legal materials, it was pointed out that regardless of how one felt about the situation – and in that regard, he was hardly alone and merely saying what everyone including Harry felt about it – the Concubine Auction was legal under the laws of Magical Britain and, by virtue of an ancient treaty between Magical Britain and the Crown, legal or at least recognized as such by the Muggle Government and Courts. Harry bringing the young ladies to Charenwell was legal under Charenwell law provided he acted exactly as he had. While Concubines could not be released from their bonds, Charenwell required that any Concubine residing in Charenwell must be allowed in time to complete their full bond should they choose to do so. Dora pointed out that while she had been considered a Charenwell citizen from practically the moment she first bonded, she only recently chose to complete the full bonding. Had she chosen to do so earlier, her former wizard would have had no choice but to allow it since that is a concession all wizards must make to bring a Concubine into the country even on a temporary basis. The only exception was that Charenwell still recognized the right of a Wife or Consort to restrict a Concubine to the Love Bond although even then, that right only existed if the wizard had no concubines before he married his wife or Consort. Legislation was now pending to do away with the exception, even though it seemed unnecessary given the current state of the families with Concubines.

"You're not being asked to like this," Hermione said. "I think I speak for most all of us that this is not what we would have wanted. I was told early on as I began to learn about this that it is highly unlikely that any young witch who knew anything about being a Concubine wanted to grow up to be one. Look around this room. Not all of us are Muggle Borns. In fact, of the twenty-six witches – twenty-five being here tonight – who are or one day will be bound to Harry and his families, only nine of us are Muggle Borns and one of the nine is a Consort. The rest of Harry's Ladies were raised in magical families. The rest knew about Concubines and what that could mean as did their families. Some of them were forced to do this to their daughters. They were given a horrible choice to sell their daughter into bondage or their entire family would be financially ruined or killed. Some lost their father or their magical guardian and the rights to them passed to a stranger who saw them only as a commodity. Only one truly chose to sell his daughter into this life of his own truly free will." She was referring to Cathy's father. "Even if the young woman in question disagreed, and she does not, that man will never be welcome here! We can complain all we want, but complaints back there fall on deaf ears. That society does not value women except as breeding stock! I won't say that attitude is universal, but it is the prevailing one."

"Fact: Muggle Borns are looked down upon back in Britain. Unless we marry well, we are relegated to the lowest jobs in society regardless of our talents, abilities or ambitions regardless of our sex. Add to it that witches without regard to blood status are at best second class in their eyes, then being a Muggle Born witch is being born at the bottom of their social order, one with little hope of upward mobility based on talent."

"Fact: the Consort Bond requires respect between the couple and love. It is exceedingly rare in Magical Britain. Most often, one or both of the people in such a bond were either Muggle Born or Muggle raised and the other would be viewed as a subversive if his or her opinions in this regard were known."

"Fact: Many in Britain view the Bond as a sign of weakness, when in reality it's just the opposite. Most magically raised people in Britain and especially the Pureblood Elites and the Traditionalists look down

on that bond since it cannot be chosen by anyone other than the couple. You cannot pick your partner in that Bond based upon their family lineage, wealth or political standing. And a Consort Bond cannot be annulled nor will that couple ever divorce.

"But Fact: our research shows that a child born from the Consort Bond and its equivalent in the fully formed Concubine Bond is born highly magical. The same cannot be said for children born outside such magical bonds, although it appears that Muggle Born witches are far less likely to give birth to a non-magical child than the purer bloodlines. The truth is, children born of magical parents who are not magically bound together are more often than not less magical than one would expect based upon genetics while children born from a magical bond are more magical than one would expect. Consequently, if it is the goal of a magical society to ensure and sustain itself, it should forget blood lines and accept these magical bondings. Magical Britain does not and were it not for the Muggle Borns who avoid enslavement to reproduce, given time it would, as they say, Squib Out.

"Fact: here in Charenwell, the majority of marriages are by virtue of the Consort Bond. There is no record of an idiopathic Squib birth. The few that have been born can be traced to specific illnesses which are both very rare and known and not to the natural decline of magic over generations without magical bonds to strengthen and sustain magic.

"Britain is a male dominated society in the extreme. The typical magical British male would not want to be bound to a woman in a manner that is truly unbreakable. Legal marriages can be annulled and legal wives can be divorced. A wife in their view is fungible and can be replaced when she is no longer beneficial to the Wizard. Concubines, being property in their eyes, are also replaceable unless they are allowed and choose to move to the second stage of that bond or beyond, arguably this is the reason why most Concubines back there are kept in the First Stage and therefore as slaves. The traditionally raised British wizard is raised to see women as replaceable. They are kept only so long as they are deemed an asset, be that political or otherwise. If you find that attitude offensive, you should. But arguably, this is merely a grossly exaggerated version of what exists and has existed on the non-magical side. The only real

difference between the British Magical concept of marriage and the non-magical ones is that in the non-magical society, the women can also choose to leave when and if she feels the relationship is no longer in her interests.

"Magical Britain condemned your daughters to a life of slavery; one they could not escape for that bond prevents them from running away or harming themselves. Had I not known Harry, I too would have been condemned to that life. Had Harry and I failed to form a Consort Bond, I was scheduled to be sold at auction this summer. Harry intervened. As unusual and uncomfortable as this life may seem given Western attitudes, your daughters will have a life which is not what they would have had otherwise. For their younger sisters, their nieces and one day their daughters, by moving here they are protected from what could happen to them back in Britain. They can never become Concubines. If you feel the need to condemn anyone for what has happened to us, do not look to Harry or the rest of us, but look to that society to the North that led us to where we are. That is what we're doing and that society's days are now truly numbered!"

Mr. Plumber seemed like he might have joined in the condemnation expressed openly by Mr. Perks. Connie was his youngest child and only daughter and that this could happen to her shocked him. But the rants he heard stayed his tongue, that and it was clear that Connie would disagree with anything he had to say that was critical. Still, Harry was disappointed with the Plumbers but for different reasons. The memory block that had lifted when he was reunited and bonded to his first best friend did not lift with regard to her family. When they were friends all those years ago, her family had tried to protect him. Connie's older brother Edgar actually beat up Dudley for picking on his sister and her friend – although Harry was naturally blamed for it when he returned to the Dursleys. Connie's parents had complained to both the school and Social Services about Harry's treatment although without success. But all of that had been forgotten and, unless and until those blocks were lifted, Harry was the stranger who took their daughter away.

Still, as uncomfortable and stressful as that dinner had become, Harry knew it could have been far worse and he felt there was at least some hope that the families would come to accept things in time.

He felt that what they did the next day also helped as the families were taken to the airfield. Here was at least some proof as to what they had been told. Their daughters were learning to fly, or would begin to do so in a few weeks or less and they were learning to fly for a reason. It also helped that they had lunch at the base with the girls who were in flight training and the RAF personnel in the MAG for at lunch Air Vice Marshall Graham thanked Harry profusely for "rescuing" his daughter Martha from that Hell back in Britain. Martha had spent the last few days with her parents (her mother have moved to Charenwell the week before) and she was due to be bound to her new husband Frank Longbottom that day. He and his wife were scheduled to have dinner with their daughter's new family in Pottersport that evening and they were eagerly looking forward to it. His only request to Harry was to see if it was possible for Martha to start flight training immediately. Harry replied that the training of the Charenwell armed forces was up to the MAG really. If they had no problems with her starting ground school the next day, he saw no reason why she should not. The new arrivals were a little confused by this odd Air Force.

"What's the point in having these relics?" Mr. Plumber asked after a pause looking at a flight of Tiger Moths preparing to take off as a Lancaster flew overhead.

"I can assure you, Sir, these planes are almost in brand new condition if not brand new," Air Vice Marshall (AVM) Graham said.

"But surely you don't expect to use them."

"Why not? They fly. They can carry ordinance or troops. If it was the intent of Charenwell to stand against a frontline, modern air force, these planes might be a problem. The thing is, though, while they'd be hard pressed to shoot down a Tornado or F-16, they're not going to be asked to. Based upon the current Order of Battle, this group of relics could beat the Irish. Then again, they have no combat aircraft. But these planes are not going to be used against non-magical forces. They're to be used against the British Magicals. Those people have no concept of air power or air defense which makes this air force unstoppable. These planes alone will not win a war. But against an enemy who can't fight back? With the right weapons – something

we're working on – these planes will make life very hard for any wizard fool enough to stand against Charenwell and the Queen!

"Right now, we're working on getting more than enough pilots. Planes we have. We have a squadron of Lancs, one of Bostons, one of Typhoons, one of Spitfires and one of the Dakotas with at least two more of each that can be assembled and made operational. What we lack are enough pilots to man the planes we have not to mention the ones we can put together. We're also working on 'modernizing' these planes. This means we have people working on sensor systems and weapon systems as well as the weapons themselves. As originally designed and used, these planes used 'dumb' bombs and their accuracy was a combination of a little skill and a fair bit of luck. But, if we can arm them with precision guided weapons, the bad guys will be in serious trouble if even one of these planes shows up. In a war against magical Britain, and assuming we have the ordinance we want, once one of these planes shows up, we have air supremacy and can bomb them at will and without recourse on their part. Some of my chaps even think all the Army would have to do is look for prisoners under the rubble, although I'm not so certain that will be the case. But if they're dumb enough to give us a target, they're going to find out they have to fear the sky."

"And my daughter?" Mr. Plumber asked.

"The Duke decided that the aircrews will be mostly women. In a war against wizards, the ground war will be dangerous even if we have a huge advantage in firepower. In the air, they will be safe from the enemy but also be able to destroy the enemy probably in large numbers. Our Army advisors are not yet certain whether it is prudent for Charenwell to deploy heavy artillery. The concern has to do with keeping magic and the war secret from the bulk of the non-magical population and huge howitzers are hard to move and hard to hide. Airplanes are another matter. Bomb blasts can be blamed on non-military things. There's also talk of having a 'front.'"

"A front?"

"If any non-magicals ask about these old planes buzzing about, we'll just tell them someone's making a war movie. The reality is the

Ladies will be the Army's flying artillery when the time comes and that is a barrage I would not want to be under. Even more so than the lads these Ladies have a real beef with the British Magicals and who can blame them?"

That day just before noon the next "Family Flight" arrived at Charenwell International Airport from London. Aboard this flight were the last four families who would be a part of the evacuation for Harry. After all, the Lester and Simpson families had already moved to The Manors from Port of Darby. The Olivers lived in Pottersport and the Greens in Charlestown. The Delacours would continue to live in France, but would visit as often as possible, as often as once a week for Apolline. Cathy's father had washed his hands of his "abnormal" daughter, although many hoped this would one day change. Minerva and Luna had no surviving relatives, at least none they considered family and Dora and Cissy's family was also already living in Charenwell as Ted and Andy Tonks had moved there a couple of weeks earlier. And of course there were a hoard of Weasleys here for Ginny. The only ones no present were the ones the others would rather never see again.

This left four families: Tabatha's parents and her younger brother and sister; "Little" Laura's parents and her older brother and younger sister, although they were all concerned whether the older brother who was a Slytherin would make it through the wards; Kathryn's parents, her older brother and sister with their spouses and her baby nephew and her two younger sisters and younger brother; and finally Erin's parents, uncle, three older sisters and older brother, their spouses, her seven nieces and nephews and her younger sister as well. Also on the flight were some of the families of Bill's ladies. The "Family Flights" were bringing families in an order. Harry's new in-laws were first, followed in order by Bill, Fred, George and finally Neville as this would allow Neville to complete his "Slytherin Week" bondings before that importation began. The remaining families would begin arriving in two weeks once the bondings from the prior week's acquisitions were complete.

The Madley's were not a problem at all and Harry's visit with them was quite pleasant. Then again, they were a magical family that had been forced by circumstances to sell their daughter and the parents



were very pleased with how things had turned out for the girl and even more so when they learned that "Little Laura" actually had two "wedding nights" with Harry as their first was cut short by "the Invasion." All the other ladies including the Consorts would have to wait for their birthdays to get their next night with their husband. It turned out that Laura's older brother Marcus was not the typical Slytherin. Daphne had told Harry that his male Housemates had labeled him as a poof because he was never known to partake of the House entertainments and bed warmers. He found the whole thing revolting and had been secretly pleased Laura had not been sorted into that House.

"House of the cunning and ambitious my ass!" he said. "The first thing you learn there is not to be that way unless you're already at the top of the heap. And if you're at the top, there's no reason to be that way since you just take what you want rather than work for it. It's a house of masters and slaves. The masters have no reason to better themselves and the slaves no opportunity to. If I could transfer to another house or school, I would. Malfoy and his ilk might consider it an honor to be a snake. I consider it a disgrace. For most the blokes, their ambition is to be a Death Eater and the gals to blow one regularly. Personally, I'd rather have a life."

The last three families concerned Harry the most. None of the girls had attended Hogwarts which meant that if the family had heard of Harry Potter before arriving in Charenwell, it was probably from those Boy-Who-Lived books or the reports in the British Magical Press and, unless they took the Quibbler, this meant there was not a grain of truth to any of it. According to the "popular" stories, Harry was English. This was not true. His father was Charenwell, his mother was English and he was born in Wales. He lived in Surrey, but that hardly mattered as all he really saw of that place was the Dursleys, Mrs. Figg's and his Primary School. And if to be English was like what he had seen (aside from the Plumbers as he remembered them) he'd rather be anything else. But the last three families were Scottish and Irish. Neither group thought highly of the English and that was being generous. So in addition to being associated with what had happened to their daughters, Harry also had to overcome the perception that he was English as well.

The Collins family surprised him. Naturally they were upset that some unknown wizard had sold their daughter off without any concern about what might happen. But they thanked Harry profusely for buying her even though he did not know her and did not have to and for all he had done for her since she arrived. He later learned that Tabatha had written numerous lengthy letters to her parents and hid very little from them. They knew about most of the other girls for by their count there were twenty-four total and were thankful there would be no more than twenty-six.

"We wish it were less," Mr. Collins had said, "then again, I'm sure you do as well. But it's not. Yet from what Tabby told us, you lot will make this work. If it had only been our daughter you saved we'd have been grateful. But it's not, is it? You arguably saved all your wives from horrid fates and their sisters and countless others and if Tabby is right, this is just the beginning. I don't feel sorry for the people who made this necessary. They'll get theirs either in this life or the next. The only people I might feel sorry for are your children. You must admit, you've set the bar very high."

It turned out the Irish surprised Harry as well. While it was clear that the mothers were hostile to the entire situation, the men seemed to be distant, but not threatening. He had to hear about how the girls, despite their "affliction" were being raised to be good and devout catholic women and how this was something the Church would probably condemn in no uncertain terms. Harry decided not to bring up the fact that Charenwell had its own Catholic Bishop and dioceses and that its seminary trained wizard clergy from all over the world, a fact he had learned during one of his many briefings over the previous weeks. He also was not about to tell them that Charenwell was under some kind of dispensation such that his "marriage" to the two catholic girls (and they were not the only ones) was not, in fact, condemned by the Church. He figured he'd just point them in the direction of the Cathedral in Pottersport and let the Bishop sort them out. It was no like he could considering he had never been to a church before in his life. If the Dursleys were religious at all, he was unaware of it although he learned that the Evans family had gone to church regularly. The truth was he knew so little about religion in general and religion in Charenwell in particular (except that there

were churches and people went) that he felt it best to say nothing on the topic.

The men were another story. Kathryn's father Sean introduced himself as a Director of an office in the Department of Foreign Affairs in the non-Magical government of the Republic of Ireland. Specifically, he said that due to his connections with the Irish magical community through his children, he now headed the office that kept an eye on such things and kept key members of the government informed of magical issues. Harry knew Her Majesty's government had similar offices, but was unaware that Ireland had one. Erin's father was not in government, but her Uncle Patrick, who had travelled with them, was a member of the Irish Magical Provisional Assembly with a seat from Dublin which, Harry was told, all but ran Magical Ireland.

"I cannot say we are happy with the circumstances that brought us together," Erin's father Thomas said, "but if our daughters' bonding to you leads where we hope it will, then it is but a small price to pay and, seeing how you treat them, almost no price at all."

"And where do you hope this will lead?"

"To the independence of magical Ireland."

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14th, 1996, Black House, Charenwell.

The Muggles would notice. From the beginning that had been the problem. The magical/muggle Army Harry had agreed to would not be invisible when it invaded. It would be noticed by the Muggles. He chose this concept because he was not about to sit around for years and years to train a purely magical force to deal with the deteriorating situation in Britain. Charenwell had no Aurors or Hit Wizards or anything like that and he knew it took years to train even a handful of them. Maybe one in a thousand and probably less could learn all of those skills in time. He knew it took three years to train an Auror to international standards. Maybe one in ten were even qualified after their N.E.W.T.s to enter the training and most never finished. Hit Wizards were almost as hard to train. To go purely magical to fight the Death Eaters and protect his ally, it would take years to field a force that might succeed. Hence his decision to go hybrid. A

Muggle/Magical Army would not have to worry about N.E.W.T.s and could be deployed and be effective within months, not years. Not even O.W.L.s were necessary for most. Only the magical sappers needed any skills with magic and, assuming the Twins delivered - and they were already making surprising progress - the sappers would not really need the skills of Warders and Curse Breakers. But the problem was that his planned Army would not be invisible to Muggles. They would notice.

This would not be a problem, or at least not a major one, in Great Britain. Charenwell had been called upon to defend the Crown and the Crown would support their efforts if not monetarily, then by giving them cover from the bulk of the non-magical population and its press. Given that cover and the support of Her Majesty's government - at least those in the know - Charenwell could well deploy by 1998. A Muggle Army was easy to build, provided one had the means to arm it and that means was not a problem. True, they would be armed with surplus weapons. But they would be dealing with an enemy that had to be within twenty meters or less, ten meters if they wished to do more than just be annoying. Five to kill with accuracy. Muggle weapons were lethal at far greater ranges. A powerful shield charm would stop a bullet and then collapse. If there was more than one bullet on the way, the wizard was dead unless he took cover and thus was rendered unable to be fully effective. But to deploy a muggled magical army practically required permission from the Muggle government.

That was the problem with Ireland and one that had vexed Harry almost from the beginning. Her Majesty's government knew about magic and there was a long standing treaty between the Crown and Charenwell. But most of Ireland was not under Her Majesty's rule. Eighty percent of the land and about seventy percent of the Muggle population were independent from Muggle Britain and, as far as Harry knew, ignorant of the threat. Charenwell had diplomatic relations with Great Britain, but not the Republic of Ireland. Magically speaking, the Republic of Ireland had no relations with their magical population much less the rest of the world, or so Harry had thought. But all of Ireland was a part of Magical Britain and had been since the formation of the Wizengamot even if most of the Irish seats had died out. In theory - for now that was all it was - a Charewell Army could

range throughout Great Britain. But that left open the lands of the Republic of Ireland and as that land was part of the Magical Britain, the enemy could pull back to that land and remain untouched so long as the non-magical Irish remained, as Harry thought, out of the loop. To go after that last bastion would involve open warfare and invasion of a Muggle land, one which would bring in NATO and risk an all out war with the magical world. This was a war to be avoided at almost all costs. Ireland was a thorn in the side. It had to be taken so that the enemy could be contained and defeated in Britain. The Republic of Ireland was a huge thorn because unless they were on board, any attempt to take Magical Ireland risked open warfare with the Muggles. And the issue was, as Harry understood it, the Republic of Ireland was not about to listen to Britain and accept what they had to say. There were centuries of issues there. Her Majesty's government could resent the Irish with irrefutable evidence, yet unless the Republic drew similar conclusions... Everything hinged on taking an Irish sanctuary out of the picture in the end. Yet everything necessary to do that required Charenwell to convince the Irish, with whom they had no relations, to play along. Harry figured this might take years. He figured he might well be able to take the magical part of Great Britain, only to have most of his adversaries relocate to Ireland and from there hold out and fight back.

He wanted Ireland cut out of the picture first, but without the Muggle Irish this was unrealistic. Then the O'Fallons and Sullivan's arrived. They were all but offering Ireland on a silver platter and were it not for the nature of his relationship and his country's unwritten constitution, he would have accepted that night. But, while as Duke he could veto a treaty, he lacked the independent authority to enter into one. The Lord Mayor and the relevant Ministries had to be involved. Moreover, he felt Her Majesty's representatives also had to be involved. Thus, while asked the night before, he had declined to promise anything more than a meeting. Now the principals were gathering in the Briefing Room in Black House.

Harry and others felt that Britain could be taken, but only if Ireland was out of the picture. Charenwell could defeat the magicals in Britain in a couple of years without much if any help. But not the magicals in both places, or at least not both quickly and without high losses and also exposing magic to the world at large. His own foreign ministry

figured it would take years to establish the relations he needed with non-magical Ireland to avoid a general war there. The time he had bought would then be wasted. Magical Britain would fall under the Dark Lords and the Muggles would suffer needlessly. Ireland had to be isolated before full scale combat operations could begin. The potential sanctuary for the Dark Forces had to be removed and the rest of Britain cordoned off in advance of the war. To fail to do so would most likely expose the Magical World to a level that would invite an unfortunate response. The problem was that an intervention in Ireland required cooperation with that Muggle government, one which had seemed to be ignorant of magic and one which had since its independence from Great Britain been reluctant - to say the least - to stand on the same side. Harry was forced to hope for a miracle in that regard and now it seemed he had married into one. Then again, he had to get the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain to work together for a common purpose, and that might be asking for more than a miracle. Still, he could not pass up this opportunity so he called in the players for this meeting.

At the main table in the Briefing Room, he sat with Cissy, his coven wife and executive assistant. But behind him were others from his family namely his Consorts, their assistants and his two Irish wives Kathryn and Erin. Neville was there as well with his Consort. On Harry's right (next to Cissy) were the representatives of the Government of Charenwell specifically Lord Mayor Lupin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Albert Davidson, the new Chief of Intelligence Mr. Thomas Gage who had most recently worked as a contact for Charenwell in Britain supporting the "abduction" of the Duke, Mr. Joshua Dawkins the Minister of Finance, Mr. Albert Collingwood the Minister of Transportation who was responsible for the roads, railroads and now the new airport and airline, Madam Elaine Manning head of the newly formed Ministry of Housing and Urban Development that was formed to deal with the Evacuation, Madam Josephine Larson the Minister for Economic Affairs, Minerva was Head of Educational Development and Frank Longbottom who was recently named Minister of Defense (Magical). Behind them sat their assistants including Dora Tonks, Alice Longbottom, Bill and his wife Fleur from the Finance Ministry and Arthur Weasley who was now assigned to the foreign office in non-magical relations. Arthur's new boss was there as well. Across from Charenwell were the

representatives of Her Majesty's government: the Ambassador Sir Stephan Blair and the Military Advisory Group representatives led by Major General Churchill and Air Vice Marshall Graham. Their "back benchers" included soon to be Colonel Robert Granger who was chatting with his former subordinate Col. "Duffer" Wilson and a Col. Mark Howe who was British Army, yet born and raised in Port of Darby. It was into this room that three Irishmen entered. As the three entered, the introductions with those seated at the main table were made and the three took their seats.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Harry began as he took his seat, "good morning. I dare say this is the largest meeting I've held. As you were all told, this meeting was called to go over aspects of the evacuation. I am adding something else to today's agenda. Yesterday, Mr. Thomas Sullivan, Mr. Patrick Sullivan and Mr. Sean O'Fallon arrived here on the first flight of the day from London. They were part of the relocation of the families of my lovely ladies and, it turns out, they claim to also be here under the authority of the Provisional Irish Magical Council and the government of the Republic of Ireland to discuss the possibility of relations between Charenwell and Ireland. As many of you are aware, Ireland is of concern to us, so it is my hope that our talks bear fruit. That being said, we will begin with the original agenda. Lord Mayor?"

Remus stood. "The reason for today's meeting is to discuss the implications of the population data compiled by our Department of Finance over the last few weeks. As many of you are aware, the evacuation which began two days ago was anticipated to bring around twenty-five thousand people to Charenwell over the next several month. That number was based upon numbers obtain from the British Ministry of magic based upon the anticipated size of the at risk population in Britain, in other words Muggle Borns, Squibs and Muggle-magical families. The evacuation priorities are as follows:

"First priority are the families of those assigned to our Military Advisory Group and the families of the Concubines who have relocated here. Those relocations are ongoing. The MAG families began arriving last week and the families of the Concubines began arriving on Monday.

"Second Priority are the Muggle parents with magical children born on or after September 1st, 1985. These families are considered at greatest risk from the Death Eaters because of their children and the fact that they have yet to be told about magic and about their child's or children's gifts. We have been receiving substantial support from Her Majesty's Government for those relocations but, as of right now, we do not have the support of the Republic of Ireland, so those Irish families remain both exposed and at risk.

"Third Priority are the Muggle Borns born before September 1st, 1985 and their families with the families of the ones still in school coming first. Those Muggle Borns who have finished school will be relocated after the families of those still in school. The students we hope to evacuate over the Christmas Holidays.

"The final category includes Squibs and 'mixed' families, those being a married couple where one spouse is magical and the other is not. This category will require prior investigation before they are offered relocation as this category does include some Death Eaters."

"Arguably, it includes Voldemort himself," Harry offered. "His father was a Muggle and mother was either a witch or a Squib. Although I have confidence in our wards, as proven just this last week, I'd rather not invite Voldemort and his friends."

"Every potential evacuee is being screened for undesirable affiliations," Mr. Gage the Minister for Intelligence said. "We have both agents within the British Magical Government and assets from Her Majesty's State Security Service working the problem. On the one hand, after last week, I'd say let them come and die at our Wards. But mucking out the planes is a bother. That and having some passengers snuff it in flight might not be good for those who don't particularly as there will be children on those flights."

"And the flights?" Harry asked. The question was somewhat rhetorical as most everyone knew that the airlift had begun.

Mr. Collingwood spoke. "We began flights from City of London Airport last week. Currently, we're scheduled for three flights per day with up to fifty passengers per flight, more if there are infants as they need



not have their own seat. Our flights for now include personnel for the MAG and their families with one flight per day for the families of the Consorts and Concubines who've already been relocated here. The Concubine family transport should conclude by the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh. On the twenty-fifth, we hope to increase our schedule to six flights per day. This will allow us to complete the transport of the MAG and their families by the ninth or tenth of September. Under our original schedule, we could complete the bulk of the evacuation, save those students in the magical schools, by the end of November with the students arriving over the Christmas Holiday. With the new projections, we're looking at the end of February at the earliest.

"Moving the people is the easy part. But they are not moving here with just the clothes on their backs and a couple of suitcases. We also have to move their household goods: furniture, clothes, toys, appliances, pets, cars and all of that. Unfortunately, we are unable to do that by air even with magic. Their former homes must be packed up and shipped here separately. We have to pack up all their belongings, place it in a shipping container. Get that container from their former residence to one of the four container ports our merchant fleet uses. We then ship the container from Britain to Port of Darby where it then has to be offloaded and placed on a rail car that will take it to the Base or Jamestown or - for those moving to The Manors - Pottersport. The container then needs to be placed on a lorry to take it to the new residence. For those coming from Britain, we figure the process will take about two weeks from pack out to move in. The MAG presents its own problems as many of them and their families are from further a field. Many are coming from Germany and a few from as far away as Hong Kong and North America. We figure one to two months for their goods to arrive as they have to be shipped to Britain first. Still, we believe we can relocate them so long as they have a place to relocate to."

"Thus far no worries," Madam Manning head of Housing said. "We won't run into an issue until November at the earliest as the Housing and employment plans were in anticipation of the relocations and such through that time. We have substantially completed three new communities here in the West End."

"First off there's The Manors. The expansions of the Duke's House is mostly complete save for renovations to Potter Manor itself which will begin next week. Longbottom House is also mostly finished and will house Lord Longbottom's entire family, including the family of his parents. The Houses for William, Frederick, George Weasley, the Lord Mayor and their families will be completed within two weeks. The new houses for Mr. Charles and Mr. Arthur Weasley will begin construction next week with an anticipated completion date of September 12th. The rest of the Manors is substantially complete and people are moving in. We anticipate that by the end of the month and including the Nine Families, The Manors will have a permanent population of 923. Businesses have already opened specifically a grocery store, a second store selling household wares, the petrol station, a pub and the Lake Weasley Hotel with its 320 rooms and restaurant. There is, of course, additional retail and office space available for future businesses, a Health Clinic which is opening, the Primary School which will start classes on September 2nd and the Secondary School which hopes to start classes at the same time. All that is really left is the completion of the West End Commuter Rail which will link all the West End communities.

"Next there's Magoran Bay, which is being built on that bit just north of RAF Pottersport. It will be the new town where the Military personnel and their families will reside, just as Charlestown had been during the Second World War. It will be much larger than Charlestown since far more of the MAG personnel are moving here with their families than was the case fifty or so years ago. We currently anticipate 4,621 new residents who will be associated with the MAG and the town will border the Airbase to its south and the Army Base to its east. In addition, we anticipate an additional twenty-five hundred residents mostly from the evacuation. They will be employed mostly in the service sector, namely shops and businesses but also with the 400 room Magoran Bay Hotel, the new hospital and the two primary schools. Magoran Bay will be serviced by both West End Commuter Rail and National Rail.

"Finally there's Jamestown which is mostly complete. The industrial sector will be up and running by the end of this year if not sooner and will be the largest employers for the city. There are five, six hundred room hotels which will house our new residents until their belongings

arrive from abroad. Approximately ten to twelve thousand will live in the apartment complexes along the beach and there will be housing for at least another ten thousand inland, many of those being single family dwellings. The inland neighborhoods can be expanded, but not enough to meet the new projected population demands. The main shopping district will be along the coast, with local shops inland. Jamestown will have its own hospital, and currently is planned to have five Primary schools and, one day, two secondary schools. It will be serviced by both National Rail and West End Commuter Rail with six planned stops for the later. As will also be the case in Pottersport, the Commuter Rail will be underground."

"I take it you're saying that while Jamestown can be expanded, it cannot be expanded to take into account the new population projections," Harry said.

"In theory, we could, Milord, but not without a complete redesign and rebuilding of the new infrastructure. It would be both less costly and faster just to build another city somewhere else."

"In other words," Harry nodded, "you're recommending the plan for a second new city on the north coast between North and East Farms."

Madam Manning nodded. "The ideal locations seems to be on Portian Bay in the vicinity of National Rail's repair facility."

"Agreed," Mr. Collingwood added. "We are anticipating and increased need for rail traffic and that means we'll need to expand that facility as we will need more locomotives and rolling stock. As the planned commuter rail can run on the overhead wires already in place and will be the same gage track as National, it is my recommendation we use that facility for maintenance of the commuter rail trains as well. Furthermore, we recommend expanding the National Rail line to run along the south coast from Jamestown to Port of Darby which should reduce traffic issues."

Harry nodded. "More passenger trains as well then?"

"We can't say for certain. My Department's current plan includes expanding the airport at Port of Darby and would call for a third one at

this new city. Once the evacuation concludes, we'd start scheduled service between those three airports with our current passenger fleet with an eye to expanding the fleet for scheduled international service at a later time when the international situation is more stable. Passenger rail, aside from commuter rail, might actually decline, being used for holiday travelers and sight seeing trips as opposed to other transportation."

"And what are the population projections?" Harry asked.

Mr. Dawkins, Finance Minister rose as it was his department that had worked on this matter. "You read our report on the inaccuracies in population projections that we obtained from the British Magical government?"

Harry nodded. "Didn't understand most of it except the bottom line that the Ministry numbers are way under reality and the evacuation could be more than double what we had assumed."

He received a quizzical look from at least a few of the adults present.

"Sorry," Harry said. "But I am only sixteen after all. By all rights and had things been different, I shouldn't even be the Duke, not yet, not until sometime after the year 2050. My Great-grandfather would only be a hundred and three and probably would still be around if he hadn't been murdered. My Grandfather would only be eighty if he hadn't died of dragon pox and my father only thirty-six. By all rights, my Great-Grandfather should be seated at this table and if I was here at all, I would be in the back benches with my parents, probably wondering why I couldn't be out playing Quidditch. But that's not what happened and here we are and forgive me if I'm not as well read as a Duke should be, keeping in mind that the average age of ascension is around eighty or so."

"My apologies, Milord."

"Don't worry about it," Harry said. "I really shouldn't have complained. Every once in a while - practically every day, really - I am reminded 'bout how much I really don't know and need to learn. It's been that

way all summer. So, the population figures please and, in view of my youth and ignorance, small words and pictures would be nice."

There were dutiful chuckles. Mr. Dawkins nodded. "As our report stated, the estimate the British Magicals are using for their population is off by a substantial margin. Their last census was in 1982. At that time, they reported a magical population of 59,823 of which 19,665 were classed as 'Muggle Borns.' Their current numbers assumed a slow population growth over time. It ignored the record birthrates that began in 1982, a significant and as yet inexplicable increase in Muggle Born births, nor did they take into account any increases due to immigration or the return of war refugees. Their previous census was in 1971 and it indicated a magical population of 107,568 of which 35,359 were Muggle Borns. That is an overall population decline of 47,745 over that span of time or roughly forty-five percent of the population. Now, while thousands did die in that war, we estimate that the majority of the decline - at least forty thousand or so - was due to emigration abroad. We believe many have since returned. Moreover we are aware of a significant immigration from former Imperial domains into Magical Britain since 1981, notably from Zimbabwe, South Africa, India and, most recently, Hong Kong. At this time we can't say for certain how many magicals have moved to Britain since the end of the last war.

"There is another miscount to take into consideration. The British Ministry by ancient treaties with the former kingdoms and clans of the British Isles, cannot tax Muggles and the Muggles cannot tax the magicals. As a result, any census figures will not include aspects of magical society as we see it that live and work in the Muggle world. This includes most Squibs, all Muggle parents and non-magical siblings of Muggle Borns, all non-magical spouses of magicals and any magical who chooses to live in the Muggle world and economy even if they are subject to the laws regarding the Statute of Secrecy. Since we count these as part of the at risk population, they account for some of the difference in our current projections.

"Next there's the issue of muggle to magical ratios. The Global projection is there're about 900 Muggles for every magical on earth. But there are local variations, of course. As you should know, Charenwell has around ten magicals for every non-magical. Due to

the nature of population growth, countries like India and China have far greater proportions of magicals to non-magicals. In the United States and Canada, immigration drove those populations and few immigrants were magical after the eighteenth century. Those countries have a high ratio of Muggles to magicals, between 1500 and 2300 to one and the Americas have a higher ration of Muggle Borns to magically born than Europe.

"That being said, Magical Britain has a historically above average ratio with approximately five to six hundred Muggles per magical. This was true as recently as 1971. But both their 1982 census and their current estimates when compared against Her Majesty's and the Irish Republics population figures suggest the ratio is now around 900 to one. I've mentioned their counting errors, and cumulatively we think their numbers are way off."

"Oh?" Harry asked.

"By their numbers, Ireland - and that includes Ulster - has a magical population of 18,500 or roughly 338 Muggles per magical," Mr. Dawkins began.

"That's off," Partrick Sullivan said.

"And you are?"

"Patrick Sullivan. I may be a Muggle, but I hold a seat from Dublin on the Irish Magical Council. As of our 1995 census, we had 28,238 magicals and an additional 7,252 non-magicals we consider as part of the magical Irish community."

Mr. Dawkins nodded. "When you consider who the Brits count and who they don't and their errors in estimates, that discrepancy is expected. Ireland always had a higher magical population as its Muggles were always accepting of magic and given the huge Muggle migration out of Ireland in the nineteenth and early part of this century, it's ratio is expected to be high. Scotland has 13,141 magicals according to the Brits and a 395:1 ratio. Wales has 6,488 magicals and a 461:1 ration. These we believe are off as well, but England is inexplicably so. The Magical Brits say there's only 27,198 in England.

That's a ratio of almost nineteen hundred to one! We believe the real figures for England alone are between sixty and one hundred and ten thousand, not including non-magicals who are at risk. Subtracting England from the Brits estimates and the rest of Magical Britain has a population of about 38,000, which is a number we know is suspect. We think the real number is closer to 50,000 taxable magicals outside England giving their tax base a population of between 110,000 and 160,000. When we include our estimates of the remaining at risk populations, we're looking at between 140,000 and 190,000. That gives us our estimated evacuation range of between fifty and seventy-five thousand. This does not include immigration from other sources as both our health care industry and expanded education system cannot rely on immigration from Britain to meet our needs."

"We are already advertising abroad for Healers, Doctors with magical connections and teachers for our schools," Madam Larson said. She was the head of Economic Affairs. "While we have managed to get a handful from the evacuation to date, most in those fields in Britain are not on our lists. Mostly, this is in the English speaking world as that language is common here. We think we can get the additional Charenwell Gaelic teachers from here."

"Gaelic?" one of the Irishmen asked.

"Aye," McGonagall said. "Charenwell Gaelic is it's own tongue. It's closest linguistic relation is that of Cornwall with Welsh a close second as it's derived from the original Britons. I'm a Scot and my version is very different as is the Irish version. Charenwell does not expect universal fluency in the original language. But there are our poets and our literary society that strive to keep the original language of this land alive."

"This is all well and good," Harry said. "But as interesting as it is, I must remind you I never learned that language and it's not the point. The bottom line is housing and jobs. A thriving economy would not go amiss either. While it is my attention to relocate as much of the at risk population that is willing to do so, Charenwell will not be some sort of refugee camp! I want people gainfully employed and living as normal a life as possible as soon as possible. Jamestown was planned along those lines. We're bringing in industry and such to sustain that city."

While Magoran Bay exists mainly to support our future Army and Air Force, I am hoping it won't turn into a ghost town once our military is no longer totally necessary. Even The Manors will, for now and in a short time, enjoy near if not full employment. But we're talking about another twenty-five to fifty thousand people! How do we employ them?"

Madam Larson, Minister for Economic Affairs rose. "I cannot speak for how these modified numbers will alter the MAG's plans for your Armed Forces, Milord. But in the short term at least, this should afford them a much large recruiting base for the Army in particular. Many of these additional arrivals could well fill jobs associated with the war effort, at least in the short term. It is safe to assume that a war economy cannot be viewed as a long term condition - hopefully not for more than two years or so. But, employing these arrivals in the war effort will allow us time to develop business and industry that can continue in peace time.

"We have a few businesses here in Charenwell that are or should prove to be viable and that can theoretically expand. They currently are only supplying the domestic market, but we believe that, in addition to their ability to support our war effort, they can easily become significant exporters. The Weasley brothers enterprises fall within this category. Their Joke store and production is designed for a net export business and its spin off businesses can be. Their Potions Plant is being built in Jamestown. It will be used at first to support our health care services, our own apothecary shops, and our war effort, but if it proves as efficient as it seems, we could be the largest producer of potions and potion related products in the world within a few years. The brothers are also now hoping to set up a Research, Development and Production plant to support their other business, support the war effort and our fledgling defense industry, yet also look to the commercial marketplace for opportunities. We are recommending building this plant in the new city. These businesses will all need labor above and beyond what those lads and their family and friends can provide.

"Their wives also have some ideas we consider of merit that have the two lads support. There are a few of them interested in the fashion industry. Given the modern production techniques the lads are



planning for their other plants, similar techniques could make Charenwell a mass exporter of shoes, clothing and the like rather than an importer with a handful of small, yet capable local producers. Moreover, that plan would allow that industry to export to the world at large and not just the magical one. Again, we recommend building that industry in the new city.

"Finally, there's Darby Technologies. It does 'magical hardening' for electronics."

"Magical hardening?" Hermione asked.

Madam Larson nodded. "I went to school in Magical Britain just as most of us have. There we were taught that magic and electricity are incompatible. This belief also holds true in most of magical Europe. It's not true. Electrical devices are not affected by magic at all. In fact, there was no 'magical interference' issues whatsoever until the 1950's or so. That's when transistors began to replace vacuum tubes in electronics. The British Wizarding Wireless is based upon a magical version of the vacuum tube. They and others failed to develop a magical equivalent of the transistor, much less the microchip and magic does have an adverse affect on those devices. We had some bright young people in the 1960's who wanted those devices. They developed a means using runes and 'micro-wards' to shield the transistors and microchips from magical interference. It's why Charenwell could 'pass' as non-magical.

"Outside of a few hobbyists, we don't make our own electronics. We import them, mostly from the non-magical United States, Japan, Taiwan and so on. They arrive here and are 'hardened' at Darby Technologies before being shipped to retailers or installed. Our telecommunications system could not work at all without that. The advanced electronics we now use in Transportation would not work. We could never have bought the planes for our Airline without it and the avionic upgrades for our Air Force could never have happened.

"Now Darby Tech has but one plant in Port of Darby. Until now, it could not expand. We're a few years behind the non-magicals in our electronics because it takes time with their work force as small as it is to harden electronics. Without a Duke to allow for the construction of

a newer, much larger plant and without the labor for that plant, expansion was not possible. Currently, Darby Tech is contracted to harden technologies for the installation of a national, cellular telephone system and other upgrades for our telecommunications. But as they're the only hardeners here, they also have to deal with the new demands being imposed by our air industries. We need modern radar and air-traffic control for our existing airports, and any new ones as well, not to mention improved avionics for our planes and such, all of which must be done through Darby Tech or sent overseas to the Americas. We'd prefer to keep it here and the new city provides us with that ability. Moreover, the process is such that we could easily switch over to commercial and consumer production. We think we should expand Darby Tech massively to sustain our civilian market and support our defense needs. But, when defense is not such an issue, we could easily become a huge exporter in this sector. Europe lives under the false notion that such technologies cannot work in a magical environment. It is a huge export market and, I think, better for us to break in than others."

"How certain are you of this?" Harry asked.

"We are confident that given a couple of years, we will be a net exporter across the board. The high standard of living we now enjoy - the highest in Magical Europe, mind you - will not be diminished. If anything, it'll get higher."

"I fear all we have done is awaken a sleeping giant and fill it with a terrible resolve," General Churchill commented.

"What's that?" Harry asked.

"It is what Admiral Yamamoto said after his Japanese Navy attacked the Americans at Pearl Harbor in 1941," the General replied. "Magical Britain and the Death Eaters and such have enraged Charenwell and, it seems, have or will unleash a whirlwind."

"And how will this affect Ireland?" Patrick Sullivan asked.

"Which brings us to our next topic of conversation," Harry replied.

## A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

As last posted.

HOUSE BLACK

As last posted.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

Following changes:

15. Wanda Helen (Parker) Weasley, age 13 (Gr-2).

16. Bonnie Faith (Carter) Weasley, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

Following changes:

18. Tracy (Davis) Longbottom, age 16 (SI-5).

19. Teresa Chastain Murdoch, age 14 (7/23/82) (SI-3), Concubine Neville (8/14/96).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

Following change:

16. Megan Anne (Albright) Weasley, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

Following changes:

14. Michelle Eliza (Graham) Weasley, age 13 (Gr-2).

15. Alice Paulette (McGregor) Weasley, age 13 (Hu-2).

16. Morgan Laura (Carpenter) Weasley, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

Following changes:

7. Olivia Patricia (Kennedy) Lupin, age 22 (SP).

8. Susan Anne Parsons, age 22 (9/28/73) (Hu-5); Original Bond 7/21/90; Concubine Remus (8/13/96).

9. Donna Bethany Simpson, age 21 (3/5/75) (SD-5); Original Bond (8/16/91); Concubine Remus (8/14/96).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

Following changes:

7. Simone Marie (Buchanan) Longbottom, age 27(SA-5).

8. Agnes Lucile Thompson, age 26 (5/21/70) (Hu-5); Original Bond (7/15/86); Concubine Frank (8/13/96).

9. Martha Helen Graham, age 25 (1/23/71) (SG-5); Original Bond (7/18/87); Concubine Frank (8/14/96).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

Following changes:

3. Lisa Faith Stuart, age 23 (8/9/72) (SA); Original Bond (7/16/89); Concubine Charlie (8/13/96).

4. Janice Amelia Brooks, age 22 (1/7/74) (SG-5); Original Bond (7/16/89); Concubine Charlie (8/14/96).
5. Pamela Hope Brooks, age 18 (10/21/77); Original Bond (7/30/94) (SG-5); Concubine Charlie (8/14/96).

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).

Following changes:

2. Deborah Ophelia Rawlings; age 26 (6/21/70) (Gr-5); Original Bond (7/18/85); Concubine Arthur (8/13/96).
3. Alice Margaret Halverson, age 24 (10/7/71) (PE-5): Original Bond (7/20/87); Concubine Arthur (8/14/96).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN: DIPLOMACY

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14th, 1996, Black House, Charenwell.

"I fear all we have done is awaken a sleeping giant and fill it with a terrible resolve," General Churchill commented.

"What's that?" Harry asked.

"It is what Admiral Yamamoto said after his Japanese Navy attacked the Americans at Pearl Harbor in 1941," the General replied. "Magical Britain and the Death Eaters and such have enraged Charenwell and, it seems, have or will unleash a whirlwind."

"And how will this affect Ireland?" Patrick Sullivan asked.

"Which brings us to our next topic of conversation," Harry replied.

"Ireland is the key, we think," Harry continued. "The key that will unlock the door..."

"What're you on about?" Thomas Sullivan asked.

"And what's this 'war effort' nonsense?" Sean O'Fallon added.

"For us in Charenwell," Harry began, "while we have not made it official through diplomacy, a state of war exists with Magical Britain."

"But we're a part of Magical Britain!" Patrick Sullivan protested. "You're saying you're at war with us?"

"With Magical Britain, yes," Harry said. "But not with Ireland, unless they should stand with the rest of Britain and resist. Our enemies are the Wizengamot and its leader who conspired together to deprive Charenwell of its Duke and to interfere with an ancient Treaty between the Crown and the Duke. Our enemies are those who sold my people into bondage. Our enemies are the British Ministry for Magic that has forgotten its oath to the Crown. Our enemies are the Death Eaters and their ilk who threaten the Crown. I can go on, but it

is safe to say our enemy is Magical Britain and not Ireland, save but a very small few.

"We would prefer an Ireland on our side. We would prefer the Magicals of Ireland to stand with us. Our problem is ... it's not just Magical Ireland. To take Ireland out of the picture, to help you Sir, requires the support of the Government of the Irish Republic. Ulster is under the governance of Her Majesty's government, to whom Charenwell has been allied since 1217. But the south is not. We cannot help in the South without support from that Muggle Government and we are well aware of the historical issues at work here."

"Our Taoiseach, also known as our Prime Minister Mr. John Burton and our President Mary Sullivan," Sean O'Fallon began, "are aware of the magical issues. I am from the office of Magical Affairs..."

"She a relation to the other two gentlemen?" a voice asked.

"No," Sean said. "Not closely. A sixth cousin by marriage, I think and no closer otherwise. My job, even though I'm a Muggle..."

"Non-magical," a voice corrected.

"Yes, non-magical. I am, in the eyes of Magical Ireland 'of magical' meaning I have magical connections. In my case, it is my children and my daughter who is now bonded to the Duke of this Charenwell. Still, I and we are rightly concerned about this war against Magical Britain. I can speak for my non-magical government and state that it concerns us greatly. Should you invade..."

"Charenwell has no issues with Ireland, North or South," Harry replied. "But you are a part of Magical Britain both North and South and, while by our Treaty with the Crown we can operate in the North in Ulster - when we're ready - we can't do so in the South. Your Non-Magical government in the South is not under the control of Her Majesty. But magically, it is under the control of the British Ministry of Magic and the Wizengamot. Charenwell's issues are with the magicals of the rest of British Isles, not Ireland. But to leave Ireland out of our planning... The Irish Republic in the South could become a safe

haven for our enemies. We'd rather just deal with Britain and not your homeland and by that, we'd rather not have to deal with Ulster either. To deal with Magical Britain in the south of Ireland would ultimately require us to invade and set us at war with the non-magicals there and probably with a fair few others, far more than we can ever expect to defeat. Unfortunately, to ignore the Republic altogether would give our enemies a safe haven from which they could attack us and to which we are reluctant to go."

"And what if Ireland were no longer a part of magical Britain?" Mr. Sullivan asked.

"Politically, that would be an ideal situation," Harry replied. "We have no cause to go to war with Ireland except to the extent that it is part of and supports magical Britain. The Crown has issues with the Death Eaters and the inept magical government that allows them to prey upon Her Majesty's subjects, not with any geographic situation, at least as far as I am aware..."

"There is Northern Ireland," General Churchill pointed out. "While our government is trying to reach an accord and the troubles are not what they once were, it is still a potential powder keg."

"During the last wizard war," Alice Longbottom said, "the Death Eaters used Ulster as a training ground. I cannot say whether their predations there may have been a cause of the Troubles between the non-magicals - and there's some evidence to support they may have played a role - there can be no doubt that it exacerbated the situation. Our information suggests this was deliberate as it kept the Muggles focused on what for the magicals was a side show in the war rather than concentrating their efforts in the main theater, as it were."

"We were not blind to what you magicals were up to," General Churchill said. "But you are correct that the problems in Northern Ireland at that time were of more immediate concern."

"This was one of the reasons why Her Majesty asked the previous Duke to intervene," Sir Stephen said. "The other was she felt and still feels a magical solution to the problem is in the country's best



interests. She wasted no time in conveying a similar request to Lord Potter here."

"I will agree a magically independent Ireland solves some issues for us," Frank Longbottom said. "But unless that independence can close all magical transport between Britain and Ireland, our strategic dilemma remains. Counties Antrim and Down lay within easy apparition range of Scotland and the Isle of Man. Most magicals who can apparate can cross there. The rest of the east coast of Ireland falls outside of such range for the most part. A very powerful witch or wizard might be able to manage the jump between South Stack, which is just to the west of Holyhead to the coast near Dublin or from the Pembrokeshire Coast near White Sands to the southeast corner of County Wexford, but very few are that powerful. The north remains vulnerable unless apparition can be prevented. And unless the Floo network and Portkeys between Britain and Ireland are shut down or prevented, all of Ireland remains open regardless of any issues of sovereignty."

"Assuming Ireland was independent and its independence duly recognized by Gringotts and the ICW," Harry said, "they would gain control over their Floos and the magical detection grid which would allow them to prevent unauthorized Portkey use, particularly international use which would include use from Britain. But that grid does not prevent apparition..."

"Yet," Bill interjected. "Fred and George believe it can be manipulated to do just that."

Harry nodded. "And even if it did, there's still the threat of brooms or even boats. As we learned last week the Ministry has no issues deploying broom riders across open water."

"Oh?" Sean O'Fallon said.

"They deployed a force of about fifty broom riders against Charenwell. Only one made it, but one was more than we expected given our wards. And Ireland is a lot closer to Britain than we are. Some kind of force would remain necessary to guard against any magical

incursions into Ireland or we're right back where we began, with Ireland as a major strategic thorn in our side."

"That little detail and several others were left out of the articles in the English magical press," Remus added. "They merely reported on our retaliatory strike against their Ministry. Then again, even handed reporting has never been their strong suit."

"The Quibbler will set that record straight in our next issue," Luna said speaking for the first time.

"The point is," Harry interjected, "unless Ireland can be isolated from the rest of magical Britain such that the Death Eaters and other hostiles cannot use Ireland as either a base of operations or a place of retreat, our ability to support Her Majesty and defeat the enemy is seriously weakened and, as our Lord Mayor pointed out, as desirable as an independent Ireland is from our perspective, unless all magical travel between Britain and magical Ireland can be controlled, Magical Ireland remains at risk. Without some kind of force to protect its shores from illegal migration, smugglers, infiltration and so forth, our moves against magical Britain would at best clear those Islands, but in exchange the problem and predations would relocate to Ireland. And we cannot even begin to move effectively at all until we have the force necessary to deal with the problem regardless of where it is."

"What kind of force are you suggesting?"

"Unfortunately, one we don't have at the moment," Harry said. "Ideally, a large Auror force would do the trick. But this country has little real need for such a force and besides, few can qualify and they take years to train. It's why we decided to go Muggle in the first place."

"Muggle?"

"Instead of training Aurors, we're training soldiers," Harry replied. "They'll be trained in magics, but there's no need to train them to Auror standards, is there? A Muggle weapon can kill even the most powerful of wizards. I'm told a soldier can kill at a hundred meters or more with accuracy and their weapons remain lethal well beyond that

range. Not even the Killing Curse has that range. Ten meters with accuracy and it's ineffective after no more than thirty. And, more important, it takes far less time to train a soldier to do that than to train an Auror. Moreover, few can become Aurors. Why field a few score when I can easily field a force of thousands of lethal wizards in far less time? When my army is ready, we will answer Her Majesty's call and not even the combined wands of all of magical Britain will fail to stop us! The truth is, Magical Britain no longer exists. They just don't know that yet."

"And when will they find out?" Sean O'Fallon asked.

"Regretfully, unless they continue to be stupid, not anytime soon. We are still preparing to begin training our army. Right now, I can count the numbers of our trained and deployable ground combat force on two hands with fingers to spare. Rest assured, however, the day will come."

"And everything that has happened this summer?" Patrick Sullivan asked. "There was that fight in the Ministry itself, the massive fights with Death Eaters a few weeks later, the evictions, the fines, the concubines and last week. What was all that then?"

"A lot of that had nothing to do with Charenwell," Harry said. "It had to do with me and a handful of others. The battles were about that and an attempt by Voldemort to take me out not as Duke of Charenwell, but as the boy who's been a thorn in his side. The confiscations and some of the fines were about wills and breaches of trust and contracts unrelated to Charenwell or our relationship with the Crown. Prior to this summer, I knew nothing about Charenwell or my connections to it. The fight I was engaged in then was almost entirely against Voldemort and his Death Eaters. It is only recently where I've learned they are more a symptom of the problem, rather than the problem itself. Only the very recent events, as in the events of the last week or so were about Charenwell and our obligations both to our people and our alliances. Right now, our real ability to attack is limited. We can attack economically and diplomatically, but right now we lack the ability to engage in any direct combat operations that would have any chance of a successful outcome."

"You seem to be a little young to be thinking of war," Thomas Sullivan said.

"Lord Potter," Remus said, "despite his obvious youth, is one of the most experienced combat wizards alive. He has faced death, Voldemort and Death Eaters more times than anyone should have a need to. He killed his first wizard at age eleven in a life or death duel, for lack of a better word. He slew a basilisk when he was twelve, drove off or destroyed a few hundred dementors when he was thirteen. He won the Tri-Wizard tournament at fourteen and fought Voldemort to a standstill, something no one has ever done before as far as we know. He led six youths into a pitched battle against twice that number of inner circle Death Eaters just months ago and they all lived to tell the tale while the Death Eaters in question were defeated. He also faced down Voldemort again. But, he understands full well that he alone cannot save Magical Britain from Voldemort or itself.

"I would like to think that the vast majority of Magical British are decent people. The concubine trade suggests otherwise and it is the main thing that is rallying our people to stand with the Queen. Their recent attempt to invade us is another. But for those who run the Ministry there and sit in the Wizengamot or influence them it's another matter. The government of Magical Britain and its powerbrokers are corrupt in every way you can imagine. For most of the rest of the magical world, it is a pariah nation. Were it not for Voldemort and his cause and another sect and their cause, Britain would be a laughingstock. But, the rest of us are well aware they are not - not truly. They pose a threat, one which we could do nothing against while the Dark Wizard Dumbledore controlled the ICW as Supreme Mugwump.

"Our Duke learned this only recently..."

"It was a hard lesson," Harry admitted.

"He knows how bad it is there," Remus continued. "He knows that even with his titles and such, all he can do is work within a corrupt system. He knows that for Britain and Ireland to thrive, that system must end. And he knows that he alone cannot end it. He cannot tear down and rebuild a country on his own. It needs to be done and it

must be done for the better future of all magicals in Britain, their non-magical neighbors and for the rest of us. If we allow this cancer to fester there, we risk the total exposure of our world and the total wrath of the non-magicals who would then perceive us as a threat to them. Her Majesty has called upon Charenwell to take the lead in dealing with this threat to us all. Lord Potter cannot do it alone and, ideally, neither can we.

"In addition to our historic obligations and recent agreements with Her Majesty's government, we are working with our ambassadors and through our seat in the ICW to contain this problem. Politically, Britain is or soon will be isolated. We cannot count on the rest of the magical world for military support, but we believe we can, one day soon, count on them not to support magical Britain. We are months and more away - maybe - from being able to intervene militarily and a year or more from being able to do so as we would like.

"The Duke has not asked, so I must. You came here with letters from the Magical Dial - the magical provisional government of Ireland and from the non-magical government authorizing you to treat with us. Mr. O'Fallon carries letters appointing him as permanent ambassador for the non-magical Irish Republic. Mr. Patrick Sullivan is authorized to speak as and on behalf of the magical provisional government and his brother Thomas has an appointment to serve - if accepted - as the permanent ambassador to Charenwell for such provisional government.

"Lord Potter, our Duke, is our Head of State. But I as duly elected Lord Mayor am the Head of our Government. What is it you ask of us? And what is it we can ask of you?"

"We wish for nothing more or less than our independence as a magical nation," Patrick Sullivan said. "Since even before I was born, our provisional government, duly elected by our people - and that includes our Squibs and magically aligned and supportive Muggles - have effectively governed Magical Ireland. The London government neither deploys its Aurors or any other MLE types to our lands unless we request them nor do they truly rule over us. All we do for them is ensure our taxes are duly paid - or at least those taxes that they assess against us. Our land has produced no Death Eaters..."

"None that are still alive," Sean O'Fallon said.

Patrick nodded. "For the most part and the better part of a century, we have handled our own affairs. We have a handful of Aurors and scores of others to enforce the secrecy laws, although I'll admit we are less inclined to obliterate first and ask questions later when it comes to the use of magic in front of us Muggles. The English prefer it the other way, to alienate the Muggle world altogether. We're Irish. We never hated magic or non-magic. So we avoid that method unless it proves necessary - NOT convenient! When the Wizengamot was founded, a third of the seats were ours! Over time, the lines died out and the English took over our rightful seats. We began forming our provisional government over a century ago when the last of our magical seats in that body passed to an Englishman, one who had no connections to the original clans on either side of the Irish Sea. We represent over a quarter of the known magicals in Britain and have had no true voice in ages. So we decided to take London out of the equation.

"That was long before my time as a person or as a member of magical society. I was born and remain a Muggle. I knew nothing of this world until my wife and I had a magical child - our first born - who we named Irene. Not long after her first manifestation of accidental magic, we were approached by a nice young couple who were magical themselves with a son of their own not much older than our Irene. It was they who told us about magic and introduced us to this world.

"My two daughters seemed to avoid the fate of so many others like them in Britain. St. Patrick's was not a major source for concubines, despite our numbers of 'available' young women which would have made us a primary source. Our Headmasters and such sold but two or three a year into such bondage. It seemed just enough to keep the English out of our lives in that regard, but for the young ladies involved, it was two or three a year too many. For my family extended family, as one of them is my Niece, it is one too many and I'm sure my brother and Sean agree with that point even if we believe in the end our daughters have done quite well in the end.

"This summer proved our tipping point. We've been running magical Ireland for ages now, it seems and we believe we're doing a fair job of it by our people, both magical and not, which is more than the English can claim. They loath or fear their non-magical neighbors. Squibs there are wise to flee to the non-magical world and people like me - non-magical parents - are ignored and our children taken from us either over time or through that damnable auction for daughters! We pay almost a third of their taxes and we have no voice, no protection from their predations, and no recourse in their so called courts 'cause we have no voice any longer in what was once our own magical government. They sell our young women as cattle and there's nothing we can do about it! They raise our taxes at a whim and we get nothing from them for the increases! What social services exist in Magical Ireland exist 'cause we see to it, not because they do! Our school is entirely funded by us as is our health care and yet we still have to send them money to fatten their vaults! We're done with it and with them! Our Magical Dial has unanimously agreed to sever all ties with them and seek independent status.

"As a magical government alone, we can and have run Ireland, all of it and not just the South. We only look to London when we have to, and that's usually when an English Magical causes trouble or in the rare instances when we need to send one of our own to prison. Give us independence, and we will handle our internal problems as we have for ages. But..."

"But?" Harry asked.

"We would be missed were we to up and leave." Patrick said. "We're a third of their tax base as it is and if they spend a tenth of that on Ireland, I'd be shocked. We represent eighty percent of their domestic food supply and we know that's only about eighteen percent of their total. They import most of the rest..."

"From us mostly," Harry said.

Patrick nodded. "They might take notice if we took our ball and went home as it were and we are in no position right now to do anything really if they did. For every trained Auror we have, they have several and ours are either long in the tooth, as it were, or too inexperienced

to deal with an outright attack. To gain in law what we already have in fact - our independence as a government at least and as a people we hope - we need international backing in the ICW and, maybe, in terms of force."

Harry nodded. "An independent magical Ireland, one which is not a safe haven for our enemies, is in my country's strategic interest. But my concern remains at what cost to Charenwell and, more critically, what cost to the Irish Republic and all of that? By my alliance with the Queen, should I have a deployable force - and in time I shall - Northern Ireland is within her dominion and, therefore, within my mandate as her magical ally. But even if Magical Ireland is independent or declares itself so, unless my government has a similar agreement with the non-magical Irish government in Dublin, we are ... we can't really do much. We will not risk unnecessary war with any non-magical government or people. In that regard, we are as bound by the treaties and Statute of Secrecy as any other magical government."

Sean O'Fallon nodded. "When it was learned less than a week ago that my daughter was here and I and my family invited to relocate here, this was, naturally reported to my superiors in the government back in Dublin, at least those cleared to know of the world of Magic. The Foreign Minister made a recommendation to our Prime Minister who forwarded it to the President as she is our Head of State and has under our constitution, significant authority in regards to certain aspects of foreign affairs, namely the final appointment of ambassadors and signing treaties. The more routine operations of our Foreign office are under the direction of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet secretary."

"What's the difference between the two?" Harry asked.

"Their President is like you in their governmental structure in many ways," Remus answered. "She is Head of State but not the Head of their Government. That function lies with the Prime Minister just as I am Head of the Charenwell Government. Unlike you, whose position is hereditary, she is elected to office to serve a seven year term. Their PM is like Britain's PM, as in he is not directly elected but appointed from their Parliament should his party or a coalition of parties he



leads hold a majority of seats following the general parliamentary elections. I believe that's a fair statement."

"It is," Mr. O'Fallon said, "if simplistic."

"Fair if simple works for me for now," Harry said. "Before coming here, I knew little about governments, not that I know a lot now. What I knew of Britain was we had a Queen and Royal Family whom my Uncle claimed were spoiled, overpaid (he believed if they earned a Pound a year it was a waste of money) and several other less than flattering things; a Prime Minister he loathed. He hates Labour and thinks the Conservatives are not much better. I knew we had a Parliament and he had any even lower opinion of them. We were taught a little about such things in Primary School, but not much at all really."

"It's usually taught in greater detail in Secondary School," Hermione added.

"So the Duke is similar to our President or the British Queen?" Mr. O'Fallon asked.

"Similar," Remus said, "and also very different. As Duke, he is Head of State and has limited power in our system of government and has for ages. He has final authority over any treaties that suggest or require military alliances or such as he is Commander-in-Chief of our military, when we have had one. He also has significant authority in regards to our relationship with Her Majesty's government as his house is personally aligned with them. Aside from that, he has no control at all. Trade and domestic affairs were long ago delegated to the High Council and Lord Mayor and justice to the High Chancellor and the courts. Under our system, neither the Duke nor those in the immediate line of succession may serve directly in government as elected officials or by appointment. This ban extends to any wives-at-law or Consorts but not to his Concubines, unless they are the mother of the Heir. For our current Duke, this ban only affects his Duchess. As the Countess, her children and the children of her House are a separate line, they are not so barred.

"But, when trying to state what the Duke's authority really is, we have to look at his many 'hats.' The Duke of Charenwell, sovereign and Head of State is but one and it's the most recent as it came into existence in 1217. Lord Harry is the twenty-seventh Duke. The separation between the Duke and the local government predates that. That separation dates back to 699 and the ascension of Harfeld, Second Lord of the Isle. Lord Harry is the forty-first Lord of the Isle."

"And what's that?" Thomas Sullivan asked.

"This land was first settled by colonists from Mercia under the leadership of Dargoth, First Lord of the Isle and second son of Atherol, a Lord in Mercia. As second son in his line, he would not inherit his father's lands or titles and was expected to make his own way in life in that regard. He was not truly cast out on his own. His father provided him with ships of that time and supplies. He left Britain in four such ships with his five sons, several cousins who were also lesser sons, their followers and their families and landed here in 680. Upon landing, Dargoth effectively became head of this new Clan which meant head of the people and owner of all the lands he claimed for them, which as this island was uninhabited meant most all of it. He was not expected to have any remaining interests in Britain at all except, perhaps, as a place for trade. But in 697, his father and older brother died in battle. We don't think he ever learned of this as he died himself less than two years later. His son Harfeld learned of it on a trading mission to Mercia not long afterwards.

"Harfeld became the tenth Lord Potter of Mercia, Anglia and Umbria and twenty-fifth Head of House Potter. As Lord Potter, he became responsible for extensive lands in England as Vassal to more than one of the Saxon Kings of the time and as a member of the ruling council of magical Britain. To give up those positions would effectively divest his family back in England of their lands and protections which had been held for almost 600 years. But to retain those positions required Harfeld and his successors to maintain a physical presence in England much of the time. He could not 'rule' in both places at once, so his people here set up the current system where they manage their own local affairs while he retained authority over their relations beyond the sea.

"What he did retain here was his control over the land itself. For all intents and purposes, he owns almost all of it. Port of Darby, part of Pottersport and parts of what we call East Farm were originally granted to some of his followers and have remained independently owned ever since, but the rest of the lands are his and as the owner he has significant say as to their use. Most of us live on his lands as a kind of tenant. If our 'lease' is for farmland, we cannot build a town or factory without his leave. There are similar restrictions in lands designated as village or town. And, he controls development of the undeveloped regions, such as the lands where the new city of Jamestown is being built. Without his leave, no one can build there.

"As he controls the land, he has also retained absolute control over immigration. No one can move here without his leave. Through much of our history, 'immigration' has been limited to the importation of concubines, although there have been periods of exception and individual exceptions such as myself. The last significant exception was during and immediately after World War II when the Duke allowed the RAF to operate an air base here and later, when the war ended, allowed those who lived there or had served there the right to remain or move here permanently. When it comes to opening lands to settlement and development, he has total control."

"And what about the burden on the government?" Thomas Sullivan asked. "How do you pay for that city and the services it needs?"

"The city is being built at my own expense," Harry said. "Although it sounds like I can change our tax needs at a whim, that's not how it works. I have no say in taxes except by virtue of being this country's largest – dare I say majority taxpayer. I can't force the High Council to raise taxes, but I can prevent them from doing so under certain circumstances none of which seem to apply here."

"So you're paying for all of that?"

Harry nodded. "It's a long term investment in our future," Harry said. "My family should see a return on this investment in time, although I might not live to see it. My return shall be from increased rent revenues and investments in the various businesses. As for the services that are provided by our government, for now I am covering

those costs as well, although we hope the increased tax base will more than make up for that fairly quickly at least fairly quickly as compared to the cost of building the city and moving the people here."

"That must be a fortune!"

"Assuming no unanticipated costs," Bill said, "Lord Potter will still realize a net gain for this year. He just won't make nearly as much as he would have otherwise."

"And your military?" Mr. O'Fallon asked.

"It is being funded in part by Her Majesty's government," General Churchill replied. "The Duke already owned the planes that currently make up his Air Force. They will be armed mostly with refurbished surplus weapons and the Duke owns the company that will supply their munitions. What Her Majesty's government does not fund..."

"We're selling bonds to offset those costs," Mr. Dawkins said. "We're hoping to avoid any increase in taxes and we're even less inclined to borrow directly. Bonds are, after all, a kind of loan, but it's one without recourse should our economy go pear shaped. That is also something our Ministries are now working hard to avoid. Right now, we see these projects as feasible without significant impact upon our finances or economy and particularly if we get the new residents gainfully employed and therefore paying taxes in short order."

"So, you've now heard about our problems and we yours," Harry began.

"You're not concerned about what you have told us?" Thomas Sullivan asked. "I cannot help but think at least some of our discussions today are not meant for dissemination back in Britain."

"At least two of you are remaining here with your families," Harry said. "One is from the government of the Republic of Ireland where I assume there is some kind of official secrets rules and these discussions fall within those rules."

"That is correct," Patrick Sullivan replied. "I will be returning because of my seat in the provisional government, but my brother and Mr. O'Fallon will remain regardless of the outcome of today's discussions."

"So, there's really no risk in telling you what we've told you, especially because most of this information can be found in our newspapers which, of course, we don't send to Britain. Even if this somehow got back to Britain, the only ones who should really be concerned about it are the three of you. When we are ready, it is doubtful Magical Britain will be even if they start right now. But should they learn of your plans for independence too soon, they could take action against you and we would be hard pressed to do anything but complain in the ICW."

"Who may well turn a deaf ear," Mr. Davidson from the Foreign Office said. "Until Ireland is recognized by them as an independent nation, their actions fall within the internal affairs of Magical Britain and would not raise an interest with the ICW absent a serious breach of the Statute of Secrecy by the Magical Brits. If the Irish were to be the breaching party, the ICW would only become concerned if the Brits fail to take appropriate action."

"And what would it take for the ICW to see it differently?" Mr. O'Fallon asked.

"First off, recognition of your right to self rule by the Muggle governments with concurrent jurisdiction over the lands, specifically Her Majesty's government for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland for the South."

"I'll need to consult with London, naturally," Sir Stephen interjected, "but in principal I don't see this as an issue. It is known to us that magical and non-magical boundaries and sovereignties are not identical. After all, all Magical Ireland is now governed from the British Ministry of Magic in London in law if not in fact, including the South. So long as an independent Ireland maintains the relations required by treaty with Her Majesty for Ulster, the fact they govern themselves and all of Ireland from Dublin or wherever is a minor issue really."

"That is the opinion of my government as well," Mr. O'Fallon said. "Again, in principal. The devil is in the details. We also feel that given the current non-magical divide and the fact that the events in magical Ireland could affect either or both the interests of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, some sort of intergovernmental communication regarding magical issues of common concern may need to be established."

"This might fall under your bailiwick, Arthur," Mr. Davidson commented. "A possibility would be to set up such a liaison through the Irish and British non-magical missions here in Charenwell. For the last two centuries or so, our meetings with the Crown and the British non-magical officials have been held here either at Government House or at the Crown's estate in South Farm. In that way, knowledge of the magical world is limited to those who already know or by virtue of their position and need to know. The lower level types who typically would show up for international discussions are therefore excluded since they are not allowed to travel here."

"That and we can keep the British Press out entirely," Remus said. "It's a major reason why Her Majesty and her family visit almost every year. Our press maintains a discreet distance as it were."

"So, we meet with our British counterparts here?" Mr. O'Fallon said.

Mr. Davidson nodded. "While we ignore the Statute of Secrecy within our own borders, we are still bound by it. Our means of communication with the Crown and the Crown's government has been approved with few conditions by the ICW. A more direct communication might fall afoul of the concord. Logistically, assuming your embassy here has sufficient communications with Dublin – which should not prove too difficult – it would be less complicated than having to open a similar mission in London right under the noses of the very magicals you seek to disassociate with.

"Now, assuming you have the ear, if not the approval of the non-magical governments with concurrent jurisdiction over your future Magical Ireland, you also need for Gringotts to recognize you as an independent entity."

"They already do," Patrick Sullivan said. "We've had our own national branch in what is now Leinster since about the sixth century which was before the formation of the Wizengamot. Our primary branch is in Dublin, but the controlling goblin clan resides at the original branch."

"We figured that was the case," Mr. Dawkins from Finance said. "We were aware there was a goblin clan in Ireland that did not answer to the London Clan except through their own international council which is suggestive of goblin recognition that Ireland is separate in their eyes from England. After all, Ireland was totally independent of England until the reign of Henry II and remained largely so for a few more centuries. From the Goblin perspective, the twelfth century is relatively recent history."

"Which leaves the issue of magical recognition," Mr. Davidson said. "You need the sponsorship of three seats in the ICW before it will even consider recognizing Ireland as independent and deserving of a seat of its own. Naturally, Charenwell would be willing to act as sponsor, but that leaves two more. Now, as a result of recent events, marriages and betrothals, we can probably count on support from Magical France if for no other reason than they led the effort to oust the British from their decades of dominance in the ICW. Actually, it is possible to count on the support of several other countries on the continent as they all seem eager to stick it to the Brits, but France is the key."

"Not Charenwell?"

"No. Our rather unique situation in regards to the Statute of Secrecy has made us a rather minor entity within the ICW in terms of influence in such matters as we do not have to deal with nearly as many of the secrecy issues as the other member states. Our support is useful, but alone is of little moment."

"Then again," Remus said, "if we were to be the guarantors of Irish sovereignty and were able to do so, our support would be critical. The last thing the ICW wants is get involved in such matters. It would be one thing if the British Ministry was willing to let Ireland go. It's quite another if they should object."

"Which we expect they will," Patrick said.

"Hence, unless you can keep them out of your affairs and your country on your own or with the aid of an ally, the ICW might be reluctant to recognize your independence before the fact. Until your independence is an incontrovertible fact, ICW intervention or sanctions against Britain would be deemed as unnecessary involvement in a purely domestic dispute. The ICW is concerned with keeping magic as secret as possible from our non-magical neighbors and maintaining the peace between its member states, not getting involved – for better or worse – in local politics which would be how they might see this if you cannot stand on your own."

"What do you mean by 'guarantors'?"

"If Ireland can govern itself..."

"We're already doing that."

"And keep the British from exercising or regaining its control, then Irish independence would be a foregone conclusion. But they're not going to get involved if the British seem capable of regaining control."

"So, just declaring our independence is not enough?"

"Was it truly enough when non-magical Ireland sought its independence from the rest of Britain? As I understand, that was a difficult struggle even when the majority in Britain and a significant faction in their Parliament were at the very least sympathetic. It was true for the Americans as well at least until France saw an opportunity to stick it to its historical rival and even then it was by no means assured."

"Good point."

"Excuse me?" Harry interjected. "Can someone tell me why the ICW is so important to any of this? Why does Ireland need them at this time?"



"Leverage," Remus replied. "If Ireland is recognized as independent, and better yet if they have their own seat in the ICW, were Britain to even attempt to regain control, it would be seen as an act of aggressive war and Britain would be subjected to embargo and blockade at the very least. International intervention could follow. As arrogant as they are, I doubt most of them think they can truly stand alone against the rest of magical Europe. Although, if Ireland can be defended without ICW support by themselves or with our support, it would have the same practical effect, which is the maintenance of an independent magical Ireland, one which we need not worry about as a safe haven for our enemies across the water."

"We have no interest in remaining either pawn or vassal to the Ministry of Magic in London or the various factions vying for control over there," Patrick said. "That being said, at this time while we are politically ready to govern ourselves, we are not in a good position to deal with London should they object. Basically, our defenses are at best limited. And this brings up a point we have not addressed today, at least from the Irish perspective, which is your proposed evacuation of the Muggle Borns and others in the 'at risk' population. To depopulate us by a quarter or third runs counter to supporting our desire for independence from Britain. We cannot hope to stand against them unless we all stand together."

"Right now, even if all magical Ireland stands together, it would be a difficult thing to manage should London make a serious effort to keep us within their control. As stated earlier, while we have a few trained magical fighters, they are not nearly enough to police our country and stand against another. We need to train for our own defense and protection and to take away up to a third of our potential manpower base is counter-productive. Should you do that – and we understand this relocation is purely voluntary – should you do that, then to stand against England would require 'foreign' intervention at the outset and going forward for some time."

Harry nodded. "You have a valid point. Our relocation plan had two goals regarding Britain. One is to relocate those at greatest risk from the current troubles to a safe new home. The other was to deprive magical Britain of manpower that might stand and fight when we choose to intervene. If Ireland is not part of that problem, the

relocation is of less critical importance. However, I would still recommend a limited one, particularly insofar as there are Irish in the at risk population who through their work or school are and will for the foreseeable future remain somewhat tied to Britain. This would include at the very least those families with children attending Hogwarts or on the list to attend Hogwarts or any schools in Britain other than St. Patrick's. But, should Ireland succeed in becoming truly separate from Britain, the remainder of the population – which I assume is the vast majority – would no longer either be at risk or factor into any possible defense of Britain.

"Still, all of this is based upon the assumption that Ireland can break away successfully and keep Britain out. Unless I misunderstood you, right now Ireland cannot hope to prevent Britain from regaining control should they desire to do so and I must point out at this time we are in no real position to help. We have no Aurors, no Army, and no Army in training as of today. A year from now it will be very different. But right now, the only reason Britain is of little threat to us despite the trouble we've been giving them is because they can't get past our wards. We're safe from them. But right now they are also safe from us and until that changes, most of this is academic. How long from now will we be able to take action?" Harry asked somewhat rhetorically.

"We've modified our force projections over the last couple of weeks based upon what we are learning about certain magical solutions to various problems mainly in the areas of logistics and transportation," General Churchill replied. "Unless we are in agreement about the need for artillery and motorized transport, which we now think may be less necessary, we're now looking at 1000 man Battalions with about 600 shooters and 400 in the support elements. At least one will need to be airborne to secure a beachhead for follow-on units arriving by ship or maybe Portkey. Still, we think we'll have three combat ready Battalions ready by April or May, June at the latest with two more nearing readiness just based upon our current recruiting numbers..."

"With at least some air support," Air Vice Marshall Graham said. "Our force limitation is aircraft, not so much personnel as the full Air Force will not be ready until late next fall. It seems right now we can train

aircrew and such faster than we can assemble the planes in storage, although that might change."

"And if we were to send some of our lads?" Patrick asked.

"That will need to be coordinated with the non-magical governments," Sir Stephen said. "My government would be concerned about training and arming troops from Northern Ireland, given the situation there..."

"And mine would be concerned about training under the British Army without any representation from the Irish Defense Forces."

"Coordination issues aside, if Ireland was to send recruits, could we train them?" Harry asked.

"Without regard to the political questions," General Churchill said, "and recognizing our current priority is training Charenwell and others who will fight in Britain or against Magical Britain, training the Irish to defend themselves seems feasible on the surface. And it need not be just the lads. How the Irish choose to man their units is their concern, not ours. Charenwell has chosen to man its infantry units with just lads, but the supporting units can and will include women as well. The 'fighting lasses' will be in the Air Force, the 'fighting lads' in the infantry. Otherwise, we have no recruiting restrictions from a policy standpoint. Aside from the emphasis on women pilots, our manning policy mirrors that of many Muggle armed forces."

"So the answer is?" Harry asked.

"My recommendation would be if the Irish are either incorporated into Charenwell units or if the Irish units we train are part of the overall force that will one day deploy against Magical Britain, I see no real issue aside from the fact that an all Irish Battalion or Brigade would form after at least our first Charenwell units. But if their lads are strictly for home defense, they would be of lower priority unless we wish to further delay intervention. That's not to say they won't be trained as soon as possible after arriving. It means they would not be fully organized into combat units as quickly."

"I had hoped for an answer of some sort today about all of this," Harry began.

"We did not expect to solve the problems of the world or even Ireland today," Patrick said. "We came here to start the process one which our people back home know will take time. The issue of an Irish force alone would require us to consult with the Provisional Magical Government, the Republic and the Crown. I dare say, Irish volunteers could be sent fairly soon, but to stand up a magical Irish force would require negotiations far beyond what we are capable of deciding today and well beyond what I am authorized to discuss without consultation. But as I see it and given these times, an Irish force is necessary if only to defend Ireland from the magical British."

"Would it be possible for us to do both?" Thomas Sullivan asked. "I understand we can't decide what Ireland can do right now, but for the purposes of discussion and assuming the parties can agree and work it out, would it be possible for Ireland to both support directly the war against the darkness to our East and defend ourselves? A part of me is concerned that if we were to stand with Charenwell against Britain, either because our lads are in their Army or fighting alongside their Army, it would leave Ireland undefended and yet were we to focus entirely on our own defense to the exclusion of the problems to the East, it would seem somewhat ungrateful particularly should Charenwell play a significant role in securing our freedom."

"There are possibilities," General Churchill said. "The British Army as both a regular, standing force and a reserve. The Territorial units were initially formed for home defense, although they have been deployed abroad at times. But when used overseas, they generally don't go it alone but are incorporated into the regular force for their time. A possibility would be to train a two-tiered Irish force. One tier would be a force to fight alongside Charenwell and the other would be primarily, if not entirely for home defense. The later could be part-time and older soldiers."

"That sounds acceptable in principal," Patrick Sullivan said.

"For now," Sir Stephen interjected, "we can forward these ideas to our home governments for consideration and continue informal talks."

"There's still the evacuation."

"We can work with you to discuss the scope of the relocation," Remus said. "Given the transportation issues and the fact that for now Ireland is not at immediate risk, they are not yet scheduled for large scale relocation. Our focus right now is on Britain. Our transportation folks are hoping to get a gate for our planes in Ireland to facilitate the bulk of that evacuation and we're not there yet. They feel the logistics of moving your at risk population from Ireland to London for relocation are less than ideal and were working that problem. But, if we agree on significantly lower numbers... I think we can all agree in principal that if one way or the other Ireland is part of the solution to the current crisis and not part of the problem, then to depopulate Ireland is not in the best interests of anyone concerned. I would agree, however, that the relocation should proceed as planned with regard to those Irish who live or attend school in Britain as they are most likely on lists that are not in their interests."

"We can agree in principal," Patrick said.

The remainder of the discussions focused on the nature of the Irish Mission or Embassy as Harry and his government were more than willing to establish some sort of formal relationship with the Emerald Isle, both Magical and non-Magical. It was decided that "Ireland" would have a "joint" Embassy facility, even if it had two or three different missions, the third being the non-magical Irish mission to non-magical Britain regarding magical affairs. For now, there would be no true exchange of Ambassadors primarily because Ireland was still a part of Magical Britain, with whom Charenwell maintained no diplomatic relations and was technically at war. That and there was the fact that Charenwell would need a building or some such in Dublin and that might take time. However, the end result was effectively the establishment of relations between Charenwell and the Republic of Ireland and "informal" relations with the Provisional Government of Magical Ireland. Mr. Thomas Sullivan (Erin's father) was accepted as "Permanent Ambassador" for Magical Ireland and Mr. O'Fallon as the same from the Republic of Ireland. The three Irishmen would spend the better part of the next week working at Government House to develop formal proposals for their respective

governments which Patrick Sullivan would take back with him to his homeland.

A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

No changes from last chapter.

A/N: Having been involved in some international discussions in my past (although not at this level), I can say it's not for those who want a decision today. You discuss A, B, and C, then discuss it again slightly differently and again and... This is actually very straight forward and to the point (even if it seems otherwise) and a little unrealistic, but it's fiction so... In reality, even with the principals, they accomplished in a few hours what would normally take weeks or months...

## CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT: WORTH IT.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17th, 1996 – City of London Airport.

Hestia Jones was a thirty year old witch. She stood about 5'7" and had a slim although slightly busty figure. She had blue eyes and dirty blonde wavy hair which she still preferred to wear in a ponytail even though some considered it a little age inappropriate. Many men seemed to consider it attractive, but while she had many dates, she had few relationships of any note and none she would consider serious. It seemed all the wizards she found to be acceptable company or even friends tended to already be married or engaged or such and she had no interest in being a mistress or the "other woman."

Hestia was a Half Blood. Her father was a Muggle who had worked as an accountant or some such at an insurance firm in London. He did fairly well but for as long as Hestia could remember, he never really enjoyed his job. He would rather have been someone creative, but knew he lacked the talent. His job kept the family in a nice home and with nice, if not ostentations things. Hestia's mother was a witch whose maiden name was Anastasia Tyrell. She was technically a Half Blood, but came from a long line of magic, at least thirty generations deep. From her father, she had learned that what a person does is far more important than who their parents are or were. From her mother, she had learned a general disdain for Purebloods, at least those who thought it mattered.

Hestia's mother had worked for DMLE rising to the position as a research assistant for the Head of the Department. Her boss was Bartimius Crouch who began an aggressive campaign to eliminate the Death Eaters as soon as he took office following the assassination of his predecessor in 1979. Hestia's mother helped draft policies that authorized deadly force and the use of unforgivables by law enforcement as well as a statute that allowed for summary trial, effectively depriving marked Death Eaters of their right to counsel, appeal and several other legal protections. Hestia's mother was also part of a not so secret organization called the Order of the Phoenix that at least on the surface fought the Death Eaters and strove to prevent people from joining or supporting that group of

murderers. Perhaps it was those two activities that attracted the wrong sort of attention. During Hestia's Third Year as a Hufflepuff at Hogwarts, the Death Eaters broke through the defenses at her parent's home and killed them both ... eventually. She never learned the full details, but could guess and it had to have been horrible for her parents.

She was left as an orphan. She was present in Dumbledore's office with her Head of House and her Grandfather Ignatius Tyrell when she was told the news. At the time, the argument that followed made little sense to her. Her grandfather was more than willing to take her in, along with her two brothers but Dumbledore seemed to insist that at least she should become his ward. Dumbledore insisted upon becoming her Magical Guardian, insisting he was better able to 'find a suitable match' for her. Her grandfather was incensed. He did not seem to care that Dumbledore was head of the Wizengamot or the ICW or even a Headmaster. His Granddaughter was not negotiable, period, and if Dumbledore continued to insist, his daughter would be sent overseas to live with an Uncle. Under no circumstances would that old man have any say in his granddaughter's future.

Hestia was aware that Dumbledore had made subsequent efforts to change her grandfather's mind and had been repeatedly rebuffed. The War ended during her Fifth Year. She was aware that Dumbledore had prevented her from becoming a Prefect, yet another attempt to acquire guardianship over her. She never understood that and until very recently wondered whether her grandfather was right considering she was thirty years old now and had not come close to getting engaged much less married.

Hestia passed nine OWLs, including an Outstanding in Potions which was her favorite class. She was also capable in Charms, Transfiguration and Defense, but Potions seemed the more interesting of the courses. With her Outstanding, she hoped to become a Potions Mistress, but was more than willing to settle for a Potions Maker, which only required a NEWT in the subject. With time and effort, a Potions Maker might one day attain a Mastery, but did not have to seek out and be accepted as an apprentice to a Potions Master. Before her final year at Hogwarts, Professor Slughorn who had taught her Potions for six years retired and was replaced by



Professor Snape. In Hestia's opinion, Snape believed that no one outside of Slytherin House was deserving of study in that field and if Snape was an example of a Potions Master, Hestia wanted nothing to do with it. When she finished Hogwarts with her Potions NEWT, she went to work as a Potions Maker with a supplier in Diagon Alley. As a hobby and in the hopes of meeting a decent young wizard, she joined a dueling club. While she enjoyed the club and dueling, it turned out it was not a place to find the wizard of her dreams – at least one who was single.

About a year ago Dumbledore announced that Voldemort had returned and the Death Eaters were active again. Hestia thought that was obvious as she was at the Quidditch World Cup and had seen the crowd of Death Eaters that were tormenting a Muggle Family, and the thousands of witches and wizards who were too terrified to intervene. When Dumbledore announced that Voldemort had returned several months later and while most of Magical Britain believed the Minister for Magic and the Daily Prophet that Dumbledore was losing his grip on reality, Hestia was more than willing to if not believe Dumbledore, accept that it was possible. She followed a few members of her Dueling Club and her mother's example and joined the Order of the Phoenix in the hopes that maybe this time the Death Eaters could be stopped before things got out of hand.

That was about a year ago and for most of that year she attended meetings that accomplished little or nothing. True, until recently, the Death Eaters seemed to be more myth than reality. But she began to wonder whether the organization would ever be able to do more than argue with each other. Then there had been that battle at the Department of Mysteries. Hestia had not been involved and was a little disappointed by that, but it had proved that the Order had a mission and had been the only ones trying to do anything. But within weeks, her faith in the Order, Dumbledore and Magical Britain had been destroyed. Now she understood the real reason behind that long ago argument between Dumbledore and her Grandfather. The old goat was the largest supplier of concubines and she was just another commodity, worth around three hundred Galleons, and nothing more to him. He would have sold her into bondage, that much was certain. When that revelation became known thanks to an

expose in the Quibbler that was later picked up and republished in the Daily Prophet (at least the part about Dumbledore's supplying young women to the magical sex trade), she began looking for a way out. Another member of the Order (whom she thought was at least as disillusioned as she was) had arranged things for her which led her to this gate at the far end of a Muggle Airport Terminal.

The departure lounge seemed to be filling up with families, she noticed as she joined a queue. She saw a few kids who looked like they might be old enough to attend either magical school or secondary school, but most were younger. There were even infants. Hestia had only flown in a plane once before in her life and that was before she or her brothers started Hogwarts. She was about seven at the time, about the same age of many of the children in the queue and already seated waiting for their flight with their families. She remembered that trip, but not the details so in a way this was a new experience.

"Identification?" a voice asked when she reached the front of the queue and was addressed by a young woman. Hestia reached into her bag and pulled out her Ministry Issue identification papers with its magical photograph that had been stilled because this was a Muggle area.

"Hestia Amelia Jones," the young woman said. "Magical identification," she added slightly surprised. "Are you carrying your wand or any other magical items or devices?"

"I have my wand," Hestia answered surprised that this young woman knew about magic.

"On your person or in your bag?"

Hestia patted her jacket.

"Please place it in your bag and leave your bag by the door to the left."

"Why?" Hestia asked. Depriving a witch or wizard of their wand was considered a significant interference in their rights in Magical Britain.

"Safety," the young woman said. "While our aircraft are hardened against magic – after all with this lot the occasional bout of accidental magic cannot be avoided – we try to keep the magic down. Don't want magic to interfere with the aircraft systems. Don't know about you, but I am expected home for dinner and dinner is where we are going today."

Hestia reluctantly placed her wand in her bag and followed the direction placing the bag by the door before finding a seat. She took a seat that looked back into the terminal rather than out the window at the airfield beyond and pretended to read a book she had purchased at a stand she had passed on the way to this waiting area. In reality, Hestia was reflecting upon the sequence of events that had led her to this seat and to await a Muggle airplane that would take her out of Britain for the first time since she was a young girl and maybe for the rest of her life.

In a way, the process had begun when Harry Potter had disappeared earlier that summer. Dumbledore had insisted that Harry spend the summer at his Muggle relatives and had assigned Order Members to keep a watch on the young man and to keep him at his relations should he attempt to leave. Hestia had been assigned some of the night watches, late enough that unless the boy tried to sneak out, there would be nothing to report, although she was not assigned to the detail until the third night after Harry presumably had returned from Hogwarts. Mad-eye Moody had given her the task as Dumbledore was out of town and, according to Moody, Tonks and Lupin had asked for reassignment. July 10th had been the date of the reading of the Will of Sirius Black, a former Order Member who had died in battle the previous month. The Order was led to believe the vast Black fortune had been promised to Dumbledore to support the Order and their struggle against the Death Eaters. The will reading was the first indication that the Order was falling to pieces.

Hestia had not been there, but had heard about what had occurred. The whole country heard as the proceedings were covered in detail in the Daily Prophet. If Black had promised the Order his fortune, he was either lying or had clearly changed his mind. The fallout was that the Order now owed the new Lord Black millions. Dumbledore had

apparently been making liberal use of the Potter vaults over the years and had been caught. The Goblins did not care why he had misused the money. They did not care about the Order or anything else other than seeing their client's vaults replenished. They also did not care about the other fall out. Within a week, the Weasley family, which had been among Dumbledore's most visible supporters for years, had been effectively destroyed. Three of the sons left the country forever. The youngest daughter had been enslaved in payment for an attempted attack on the Head of an Ancient and Noble House. The elder Weasley's divorced and the husband had disappeared. Worse for Dumbledore and the Order, two of its members admitted to betraying him probably from the beginning and his Deputy Headmistress suggested she might have and they all left the country as did Dumbledore's most valuable asset Harry Potter taking with him, apparently, enough Wizengamot votes to ensure there could be no quorum and depriving both Dumbledore and the Ministry of their usual path to control such damage by passing laws making their actions retroactively legal. All of this was before the revelation about the concubines and the hundreds of girls sold into bondage by their headmaster over the years solely because they had no other magical guardian.

Over the next few weeks, other order members expressed their desire to resign. A few did and never were seen again so far as Hestia knew but some had a sudden change of heart after speaking with Dumbledore and a blank expression in response to any questions about their change of mind. Hestia might not be an Auror, but she knew the signs of a powerful, mind altering charm when she saw one. She doubted it was an Imperious Curse, but was aware of spells that were almost as effective and were not technically illegal. She wanted out. She wanted nothing to do with Dumbledore and, more important, wanted out of Britain as well. She remembered the night she spent drinking Firewhiskey with Kingsley Shacklebolt and Mad-eye Moody, but she was not so clear on what she told them. She was pretty sure her spotty memory was the result of overindulgence and not a more insidious form of magic. But she remembered the next day perfectly when Mad-eye entered her place of work:

"Afternoon Jones," Mad-eye said. As far as Hestia knew Mad-eye never called anyone by their first name, not even Dumbledore at least not when anyone else was around. "How are you feeling?"

"Like I was run over by a dragon," Hestia moaned. "Why are you here?"

"Is there somewhere where we can speak in private?"

Hestia nodded and lead Mad-eye to the 'Break Room' which was fortunately empty. Moody pulled his wand and seemed to waive it at anything other than Hestia.

"There," he said. "Now we will not be disturbed or overheard and, as an added bonus, while you will remember this meeting, not even Dumbledore will be able to get to those memories. So, were you serious last night?"

"I'm sorry?" Hestia said. "To be honest, last night is very fuzzy."

Mad-eye chuckled. "I'm not surprised, young lady. Fortunately or unfortunately, you are a loud but restrained drunk. You didn't make a real fool out of yourself if you're concerned and Shackbolt and I were gentlemen. Last night you were on about leaving the Order for certain, the country if possible and were concerned that if Dumbledore found out, you might have no memory of your name much less why you want out. Is that true, or were you just in your cups?"

Hestia nodded. "I ... I can't be a part of this. Not with that man involved, much less in charge."

Mad-eye nodded.

"If my grandfather had not stood up to him," she continued, "I'm certain I'd be..."

"Earning your living on your back or knees?"

Hestia nodded.

"That's probably a fair suspicion. You had a Muggle father and the only young ladies like you who were under his guardianship and did not wind up that way were the handful who managed to become Consorts or married before he got around to selling their paper and bodies. The only silver lining is at least until this summer he never sold a girl until she had sat for her OWLs. This summer however? Most of the girls he sold were younger yet of bonding age. The youngest, I believe, had only recently turned thirteen."

"So all that stuff about Muggle relations and Muggle Born rights?"

"Oh, those laws were passed," Mad-eye said. "Only Arthur Weasley bothered to try to enforce them and few of the bastards he collared ever suffered more than a ten Galleon fine payable over time."

Hestia nodded but said nothing. She wondered what she had told Mad-eye and Kingsley last night and the thought of what she might have told them scared her. Of the Order Members left, only Snape seemed to be more in Dumbledore's pocket than those two.

"So," Mad-eye said, "did you mean what you said last night?" It came out almost like a growl, or at least that was how it seemed to Hestia.

She shrugged. "I'm really fuzzy about what I said last night. What did I say that would bring you here?"

"You basically said you wanted out of the Order. You said you joined to do what was right only to come to believe that it was little better than the Death Eaters and Dumbledore a less obvious Dark Wizard than Voldemort, but probably darker inside. That was followed by a list of his crimes against 'us' and a comment along the lines that at least Voldemort is quick about it. Better a few hours torture and death than years and years as a sex slave, you said. How could any sane person serve that thief, liar, deceiver ... and that was when you chose not to get colorful. Well, I'm here to fix your little problem."

Hestia paled.

"I, Alastor Moody, upon my word and my magic do hereby swear that what I'm about to say is the truth or is what I believe to be the truth, so mote it be!" He then cast an illumination spell with his magic. Hestia was well aware of the nature of the oath. If he lied, if he even sought to deceive her, the light would go out and with the light, so would his magic.

"I am Alastor Moody. I joined the Auror Corps right out of Hogwarts in 1929 and served as an Auror until I chose to retire in 1982 following the last of the Death Eater Trials following that War. I was recalled to active service by the Ministry at the end of June this year following the fight with a dozen Death Eaters and Voldemort himself. I joined the Order of the Phoenix in 1971. At the time, I and many others who joined believed that the Order had only recently been founded by Albus Dumbledore to deal with Voldemort and his Death Eaters as the Ministry seemed reluctant to do so. I and a few others have since learned that the Order was really founded sometime before 1925. As a phoenix rises from its own ashes, so the real Order believes the Purebloods are destined to rise to rule over us all. I do not believe that. Many who were or are in the Order to deal with Voldemort joined because we do not believe that. We were pawns. We were and are expendable foot soldiers I believe are to be used to help the real Order take over one day. We are expendable, nothing more matters to Dumbledore.

"When the 'expanded' Order was reformed last year – by that I mean those of us who were not permanently a part of the plan to elevate the Purebloods and old families, like Dumbledore, to the position of a permanent ruling class – there were a few of us who at least to ourselves were already questioning what was really going on. Three had been working to restore Potter to his rightful place for years and had been thwarted at every turn. I had just spent the better part of a year of my life in my own trunk as a potions ingredient source for a Death Eater right under Dumbledore's nose. He told me he was unaware that a Death Eater had taken my place under Polyjuice Potion. I did not and do not believe him. My enslavement furthered his ends for some reason and as such I was merely a statistic at best. Shack had his own reasons to doubt.

"We met in secret, separate from Dumbledore and the rest of the Order. We were later joined by Bill Weasley and his Consort who had uncovered a plan that was not meant to be uncovered, one designed to destroy House Potter and elevate Dumbledore and his top Lieutenant – at least the closest Order member of whom we are aware – Molly Weasley. Molly was to use whatever means necessary to breed her daughter to Potter until Potter sired a healthy son. She would then engineer their demise and raise the son as Dumbledore's heir..."

"Dumbledore's incapable of siring a child?" Hestia asked.

Moody shrugged. "It's possible, but I don't know. Needless to say, it was agreed that Potter must be removed from that situation at all costs. He was secretly relocated to a place called Charenwell the night of June 22nd. Our group maintained the watch on his former abode for about another two and a half weeks in case Dumbledore checked. He never did. Following the reading of Lord Black's Will, all but two of our group also relocated to Charenwell, a place that neither Dumbledore, Voldemort nor their minions can ever reach as was shown about a week ago. Those who tried are dead. No exceptions. Those who ordered them to try are also dead.

"Shacklebolt and I remain. But we are not what you have been led to believe. We are intelligence agents for the Duke of Charenwell and are here to collect information on Dumbledore, the Order, the Ministry and anyone else deemed to be enemies of Charenwell; information that we hope one day will be used to destroy the lot of them. Nox!" The light had remained bright until Moody extinguished it, thus ending that which was governed by the magical oath.

"You want out, Jones?" Moody asked. She nodded. "The only way out is to disappear, without goodbyes or warnings. Any hint that you're leaving might get back to Dumbledore and he would either try to prevent it or to turn you into a weapon against the Duke. The former would scramble your brains, as you have already noted has been the case for some of our former colleagues who were less than discreet. The latter would get you killed sure as you're sitting here now. You must vanish."



"How?"

That had been yesterday and the answer found her now sitting in a Muggle airport waiting for a Muggle plane that would fly her to a place where those who might wish her harm could never follow.

A couple sat down immediately across from her. They appeared to be about her age, maybe a little younger. The woman was holding an infant, a boy judging by his clothes who looked to be over a year old, but Hestia really did not know too much about babies or their development to be sure, never having had a child herself nor knowing any infants really. She continued to pretend to read her book, but listened in to the couple's conversation, as well as any others that could be overheard.

The couple were Muggles, that much was certain almost from the start. They had three children, the older two girls were off elsewhere in the lounge playing with some other girls their age, their new friends as it were. This couple was from London where the husband worked with the Metropolitan Police – that tidbit had come out when he introduced himself to another Muggle couple. At first this struck Hestia as a little odd. She had a little experience with other forms of Muggle mass-transit, namely the London Underground and National Rail and from her experience most people tended to ignore their fellow passengers unless they already knew each other.

But it turned out the two couples had something in common. In fact, as she casually looked around there were many similar groups of couples sitting and talking. Even knew families who just cleared the queue that had relieved Hestia of her wand – or at least insisted she kept it in her bag – were drawn into these discussions. It seemed she was the only person in the lounge who was not with a spouse and children.

What the other adults had in common was that they were all Muggle and they all had at least one magical child. The oldest child in the area had just turned ten and the youngest was a few weeks old. A couple of the women, including the policeman's wife were noticeably pregnant with what they had been assured was also a magical child. This was odd. No one had said anything about an older child

attending one of the magical schools and most of the families looked like they probably didn't have a magical child that old. Magic was not revealed to non-magical parents until the child received their official invitation to school, which occurred either after their eleventh birthday or in July assuming they were not yet eleven but would be by September 1st, and yet all these families knew and most knew years before they would normally be told.

"Excuse me?" she asked the couple across from her when the other couple moved away. "I'm Hestia. Pardon me for asking, but how old is your oldest?"

"Jeanie is six and a half," the mother said. "I'm Gail. Gail Turner."

"Cecil Turner," the husband said. "Hestia? That's an odd name."

Since the magical cat was out of the proverbial bag, Hestia replied: "My mother was a witch from a long line of magic. It's a family name."

"You're a witch?" Gail asked.

Hestia nodded. "My dad wasn't magical. He worked for an insurance company, I think. But Mum was."

"Was?"

"They both were killed in the War," Hestia said.

"I'm sorry."

"It was 1979 when I lost them. I was at school at the time."

"So that was real?" Cecil asked rhetorically. "The two agents from State Security sure put on a show, but it's still hard to believe our daughters are witches and our son a wizard. How did that happen?"

"To be honest, I don't know," Hestia said. "I don't think anyone has ever bothered to figure that out or if they did they haven't decided to share their findings, or ... or ... Well, there are elements who might wish to suppress findings that do not conform to their world view."

"Like those Death something or others?"

"Death Eaters," Hestia nodded. "The bulk of them are what they call 'Purebloods'."

Cecil laughed. "Do they have any idea what that term means? Pureblood! Ha! In our world, that word is applied to breeds of dogs, dogs that are only mated with somewhat close relations. Inbreds! These Death Eaters don't by chance have flipper hands, do they? Bleed to death from paper cuts, do they?"

"Excuse me?" Hestia asked. "Well, I can't speak to flippers or bleeding, but yes. I guess you could say at least some of them prefer not to stray too far from their family tree in search of their spouses. But I can assure you, Death Eaters may sound silly, but they are quite lethal."

Cecil nodded. "That's what the two blokes from State Security told us," he said now sounding serious.

"State Security?" Hestia asked.

"Sorry. Witch right? Grew up in that world?"

"Kind of on the fence, really, at least until my parents were killed. I went to Infants and Primary with non-magicals at a school near our home. I started magical school at age eleven and was away for nine months of the year, that time was all magic. I was in my Third Year, not quite fourteen when they died. After that, I went to live with my Grandfather during the hols, and he lived entirely magical."

Cecil nodded. "They're kind of like our national police."

"I thought that was Scotland Yard."

Cecil chuckled. "I guess they were right about that too."

"What?"

"They said that to those living in the magical world, our Britain is a foreign country to them. A lot of foreigners seem to think Scotland Yard is far more than it really is. Actually, the name is now New Scotland Yard and that name is simply the name of the Headquarters for the Metropolitan Police, basically the London Police although we cover some of the neighboring towns as well, the ones whose councils decided it was more cost efficient to pay us to police their towns than to pay for their own police force.

"State Security, also called MI-5 although that's really out-of-date, began as an intelligence / counterintelligence force to deal with internal threats to national security such as enemy spies and terrorists. Over time, they've also picked up certain more traditional police roles, typically the kinds of crimes with national implications as well as certain forensic analysis that is more cost effective handled at that level rather than by the local Departments. Apparently, they've had a section devoted to keeping an eye on you lot and it was a couple of blokes from that section who met with use a little over a week ago about our kids."

"Little hard to believe that at first," Gail said. "But one of them was a wizard and was able to give us a rather convincing display of magic and explain a lot of odd things that had happened in our home since our oldest girl Gwen was still a baby."

"One of them was a wizard?" Hestia asked in surprise.

Gail nodded. "Said he was a Muggle Born like our kids."

"Muggle Born."

"Oh. What's that mean, by the way?"

Hestia shrugged. "It's a term that describes a witch or wizard who had no magical parents that we know of. Aside from that, I have no idea. I'm a Half Blood, which refers to any witch or wizard with at least one magical parent or where there's a Muggle grandparent, Great-grandparent or even Great-great Grandparent even if all the others were magical and even if, like me, they otherwise have scores of generations of magical ancestors. Most of my ancestors on my

mother's side were technically Half-Bloods but I can trace my magic back unbroken to the eleventh century for certain."

"The whole thing seems silly to me," Cecil said. "After convincing us magic was real and that our kids were magical, they told us that we were in danger because there were evil witches and wizards who would target us and our children just because Gail and I are not like them."

Hestia nodded. "Unfortunately, that part is true. They kill non-magicals for sport and families like yours because they believe your..."

"A blight on their world view?" Cecil offered.

"To put it mildly, yes."

"Is that why they sell girls like our daughters off as slaves?" Gail asked.

"Actually, I don't think that makes a difference except that your girls would have a wizard magical guardian who could do that," Hestia said. "Any wizard magical guardian can without regard to the girl's heritage as I understand it. I could have been. My father, not being a wizard meant that the right to do that or not do that fell to a wizard regardless of my parents' wishes. Fortunately, that wizard was my grandfather although another tried to get that authority transferred probably so he could sell me off. But even if my father was a wizard, which means he would also have been my magical guardian, he could have sold me. I've read that there are about twice as many witches as wizards in Britain and I think that has something to do with why that vile practice is accepted. As far as I know I've never met a Concubine, but you can't tell by looking always. I do know that trade does not distinguish between girls with magical parents and non-magical parents, but because the girls with non-magical parents tend to have magical guardians who don't know them and have never met them, it seems to fall on them more often."

"And they consider this acceptable?" Gail asked.

Hestia shrugged. "Many of us do not. Then again, while I grew up knowing that such things could happen, I think like many of us I had no idea of the scope of it. If you consider that our culture in Magical Britain is a few centuries behind yours, it makes more sense to an extent."

"How so?"

"Slavery and indentured servitude were legal here two centuries ago. Slavery was not that common, but servitude was for household staff and at least some trades. The indentured servant usual began as a child or teenager and worked without pay for a set number of years. Once their term was up, they were let go mostly and on their own and one would hope they had learned a trade otherwise... Children, particularly in the working class, were sent to work as young as four in the factories, farms and mines. Even though they were paid, they were pretty much tied to that life because they usually became indebted to their employer such that they could not hope to leave. I learned this from by Dad before he passed as he tried to place certain unpalatable aspect of the magical world into perspective."

"And the sex trades?"

"That was far more common place even a century ago," Hestia said. "Prostitution, while unsavory, was not illegal and for one reason or another for many unmarried women with no other prospects, it was either that or starvation. I'm not suggesting that what the magical do can be justified today. I'm just saying it's a society that has not seen this as a problem, just as non-magical society once did not see child labor or slave labor or other things as a problem."

After a pause, Cecil said: "Well, it is a problem for us. Any reservations about leaving were erased when we learned our girls could be sold off like that without so much as a by your leave."

"Okay," Hestia said, "I know why I'm leaving. I'm leaving in part 'cause there's nothing keeping me here and mainly 'cause it's too dangerous to remain. But the rest of you?"

"Imagine coming home from work and two men from State Security who are tasked with keeping our country safe are waiting," Cecil said. "They tell you that because of things over which my wife and I have no control – we could not know nor control the fact that our children were born magical – that all of our lives are in grave danger. That's bad enough. But then there's the problem that there's nothing our government can do about it. I'm a police officer, but that does not matter. There are thousands of families like mine at risk. We don't have the resources to keep us safe from that lot and we're not likely to get them. The only other option is to leave altogether. If we leave, specifically if we go to this place Charenwell, we'll be safe. Our kids can have normal lives – if there is such a thing – and we won't have to worry about being slaughtered. If we chose to remain, we're on our own. The wizard State Security agent has a family, and they're being sent away for their safety. If he has no confidence in the ability to remain and be safe, what are we to think?"

"If it was just us," Gail said, "we may have told the men thank you and left it at that. But our children are the ones really at risk, aren't they? If we sent our children away or if they were grown up and living somewhere else, the men thought that the Death Eaters would probably ignore us for a time. It's our children who are those bastards' targets and we're not sending them away."

"There are risks in my job," Cecil said. "There's always the chance things will go pear shaped and I'll get killed. I know this and accept this. It stresses Gail out at times, but she knew what she was getting into when she married me. But to learn that my children are at greater risk just by being who they are than I am on patrol? That's unacceptable! We're taking a risk. I'm leaving my job, we're leaving our home and family behind with no clear guarantee that we'll be better off aside from the fact that our children will be much safer. We don't know if we'll ever be able to return even for a visit. What we were told suggests our children will grow up thinking that London and Britain are foreign countries and this place we're going to is their true home. But our children will grow up and will not be sold off like cattle. That is something that our homeland cannot promise. So we're off."

"For how long?"

Cecil shrugged. "The relocation, as they call it, is for the duration of the crisis. They said best case it's at least a couple of years."

"As refugees?"

"Not really, we were told," Gail said. "We'll have a house or a flat and there will be employment opportunities. We're already scheduled to look for a place and meet with someone about jobs later this week, although they said the jobs might be a few months off. Housing is already available and is said to be – well it might be even better than what we had before. The only reason we can't just move in is we have to wait for our stuff to be moved from Britain which can take two to three weeks. Once our stuff is here and we've selected a place to live, we can move in. Until then, they're putting us up in a hotel at no cost to us. There'll be schools and programs for our children including day care and such should I choose to work. I'm a nurse by training, although I've only been part time since we started a family. There's a new hospital in need of staff so... True, it's said to be a magical hospital, but a lot of the work such as what I'm trained to do does not require magical ability so it seems like an idea. Cecil might have to take another kind of job, but we don't know yet."

"Depending upon those things," Cecil said, "jobs and education for our children and such, we might be there a while. We were told this is not an evacuation or refugee situation but a relocation. The 'host country' anticipates that thousands of us will remain even after it is safe to return here. Rather ambitious on their part but the fact that we won't be on the dole living in tents or such suggests they're serious about hoping we'll stay on. It's better to go somewhere where you're wanted."

"What were you told about this country?" Hestia asked.

"Not much, really," Gail said. "It's magical, that much we were told. We were also told that you might never know that as they use technology as well. They don't keep magic a secret there and their laws make no distinction either. There're only a few jobs that absolutely require magical ability, most do not."



Hestia nodded. "I'm a Potions Maker myself. Only about five percent of what I do requires magical ability. Before the Statute of Secrecy, my field had many non-magical practitioners. Even today, you'll find Squibs in the field – those are people born to magical parents who for some reason are not magical themselves. I guess that unless spell casting is essential, magic would not be required and that applied to a lot of jobs even in Britain. My Mum was a witch in Magical Law Enforcement. Her job only truly required knowledge of magic, the magical world and magical society, not spell casting skills."

"May I have your attention please?" a voice announced over an amplified address system in the boarding area. "We have a full flight today. We'll begin boarding with the families with children under the age of three and follow with general boarding..."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17th, 1996 – Longbottom House, The Manors, Charenwell.

Tracy Davis sat in a small salon on the Ground Floor of Longbottom House. The salon had been designed for "intimate" meetings and by that they meant a small number of people usually for tea, not the kind on intimacy that required a substantial degree of undress. Those sort of "intimate" meetings were confined to the First and Second Floor apartments belonging to Neville and his family, which now included her. This salon was recently finished as Houses Longbottom were completing their move from the Third Floor of Potter Manor to their new Manor next door. She knew that much of this floor and some of the rooms on the floors above had been furnished with things from both Longbottom Manor and the Bones estates, although she could not honestly say which piece was from which estate, aside from the portraits.

She was sitting in a chair reading her copy of the self updating book on bonds. There were now thousands upon thousands of books in Longbottom House Library again collected from both the Longbottom and Bones estates and also augmented with copies of books that had been received from other estates. She knew that the other huge homes nearby belonged to Harry Potter and his family, although to the best of her knowledge she had not seen anyone from those Houses yet. She didn't even know who was a part of Potter's family.

But she had learned over the last few days as she helped Longbottom House sort through their library and the additions that Potter had somehow managed to confiscate entire estates back in Britain and had practically everything that had not been nailed down (and much that had been) transported here, including thousands of books, many of which had not been in either the Bones or Longbottom libraries. But for now, only two books were of interest to Tracy: the book on bonds and a ongoing work on the history of this place.

Tracy was a Pureblood witch raised in a Pureblood household. Her parents and extended family were not, so far as she was aware, Pureblood elitists, but they were well versed in the customs and traditions of Pureblood society. The Davis family had managed to remain mostly neutral during the last war. The handful who had chosen sides had stood against the elites. House Davis was a family of merchants and the elitist cause was sure to hurt business. If one were to eliminate or enslave Muggle Borns, most Half Bloods and Blood traitors, there would be little business left. But they were also pragmatic and to openly stand against the Death Eaters had usually not ended well. Hence they had remained neutral.

As a Pureblood daughter, Tracy had known about concubines since before she even entered Hogwarts. As far as she knew, her father did not maintain one, and she was pretty sure she would know if he did given her mother. But she knew about them. She was reminded of this from time to time, told to be thankful to be born into a family like hers, one which would never sink to selling their kin off. That was something a Slytherin family might do. Once they had their male heir, daughters were only useful for betrothals to cement political or economic alliances. The daughters who proved either hard to match or otherwise difficult could easily end up as a Concubine. Historically, the Davis family had been Ravenclaws. As long as the daughter was studious, the family felt arrangements could be made to tap into her talents regardless of any other considerations. House Davis considered the notion of Concubines abhorrent to a degree, but could understand if not condone the institution.

But, Tracy thought as she read, what the women in her family said about Concubines and what this book on bonds said were totally

different to the point where it was hard to see that they were one and the same thing. Tracy realized that what she had been told was only a fraction of reality. She had been told about what the book called the First Stage Bond and only in the context of what the authors considered the societal abuse of that bond. She had been told that the bond was nothing more than permanent enslavement. The book said that while that was the practice in Britain, it was by no means universal nor was it the intent or focus of that initial magic. The First Stage was designed to allow rapid progression to the latter stages. It broke down the witch's inhibitions, reluctance and resistance. It did this to allow her to open her mind and heart to the wizard and the bond and allow her to accept being the part of poly-marriage, as the book said. Without the First Stage, a woman in a poly-marriage might well compete with the others for favors or be driven by ambitions and jealousies that would be destructive to the larger whole. With the bond, the woman begins to be reformed so as to place the collective over the self and initially the collective will would be the will of her wizard. That was the trap for while the witch was bound to the wizard and magically bound to his will, he was not in any way bound to her. It was this disparity in the bonds that allowed wizards to enslave witches and treat them like property and not people or partners.

Of course, Tracy thought, it did not help that most witches were Muggle Borns or less than Purebloods and most of their Masters were Pureblood bigots like or Half Bloods trying to worm their way into society. As a group, that lot thought little of women, to put it mildly.

What she had never heard about were the later stages. The Second Stage Love Bond created a reciprocal bond. In that bond, the wizard was as bound to the witch as she was to him in many ways. Her will, to a significant degree, returned. The bond was one which grew over time and, unlike the First Stage, it was built upon both physical and emotional intimacy, hence its name as if it was not the real thing, it would become so close to it as to be all but indistinguishable. Unlike the First Stage, where the witch could be shared with others or sold out right, the second stage was for life or at least until the first of them died. The book only cited one case where a Second Stage Concubine had intimate relations with another man, aside from cases of outright rape and even in Britain, it was a serious crime to rape a

Second Stage Concubine. Raping a First Stage Concubine was no worse a crime than vandalism, the seriousness depended upon the degree of damage done to the wizard victim's property. The one case where a Love Bonded Concubine had relations with another wizard was one where she was forbidden from carrying her wizard's child, but the Heir of that wizard's House needed a son and the heir's wife and Consort seemed to be barren. Aside from that exception, a Love Bound Concubine was little different than a wife in many ways.

But in two ways, she was still a concubine. If she outlived her wizard, she could be transferred and would again be a First Stage Concubine. Likewise, the wizard retained control over one important aspect of her free will. She could not conceive a child without his consent for conceiving that child or giving birth to it – the book was unclear as to which – transformed the bond completely. That was the Final Stage, at which she was for all intents and purposes a Consort of her Wizard and would remain so for the rest of her life even if he passed on. That had been the goal of the artificial magic that created the bond, one based upon magical contracts, enchantments and oaths as opposed to nature. In Britain, there was no law protecting the interests of Concubines which was why so many of them wound up as sex slaves. In Charenwell, no wizard could deny his Concubine the right to move to the Second Stage and only a pre-existing wife or true Consort had the legal right to prevent the Third Stage. At least that had been the law until recently. As the law dealt with issues of immigration, it was the Duke who could change it and the current one had. A Wife at Law or Consort could prevent her husband from acquiring a Concubine. But if she did not, then the bond had to be allowed to progress to the Final Stage and the only person who could prevent it was the Concubine herself.

What Tracy was trying to understand was why it had happened so fast for her. She had no choice in regards to the First Stage, she knew that and had known that. But when she had reached the tree by the lake, somehow she knew that lack of choice was not really all that important. When he completed the bond, and she was still amazed at how wonderful it was, she immediately offered him the Love Bond and he accepted and she already asked for and had permission to move on to the final stage and bear his child. She was pretty sure that was not normal, in fact the book said as much when it talked

about the first two stages. It said, and she could understand, that many witches given enough will to offer the Love Bond never do so or take years to do so. The Love Bond requires at least some true affection for the wizard and it is hard to have any affection for the person who stole your life away. The book said it was easier for a Concubine for whom this was a later bond to take that chance than the first time Concubine normally. Even then, it could still take months and even years for the witch to take that step. It had taken Tracy all of a minute or so and the only reason it took that long was because she needed to catch her breath.

She knew part of the reason. The last year of her life certainly made her open to what seemed like a good offer and she knew even before she followed her minder down that path to the lake both what to expect and that she would be allowed to progress her bond as far and as fast as she wanted. She had no issues with her new husband. Neville was not from Slytherin which was a plus in her book and unlike many boys from the other houses and especially from Gryffindor, he had never been mean to her. The only other boy who fit that description was Harry Potter. She knew he lived in the nearby Manor, but was surprisingly (for her) not the least bit upset that she was Neville's lady. Whether Neville had known it or not before she came to him, he had in a very real way saved her life and for that she was grateful if nothing else and she knew there was far more going on at least for her than just gratitude.

Tracy was the seventeenth of nineteen witches now bound to Neville and, as far as everyone knew, there would be no others. She knew that on the day she bound to him, not even a week ago, the fifteen Concubines were all at least Love Bonded to him. Six were already pregnant and seven had permission. The two who did not were deemed too young for now as they were both only fourteen.

The two girls who bonded after Tracy were both younger than she was and were the only girls in Neville's House she already knew to any extent as they had both been in Slytherin. Teresa Murdoch was fourteen and a Pureblood from a long line of Slytherins. Her father had been a Death Eater in the last war and, according to Teresa might well be one again. She had two older brothers and an older sister, all of whom were out of school and married and either were

likely to become Death Eaters or at the very least supported their ideas. Teresa knew she had been sold off for two reasons. The first was she was a spare daughter for whom her parents had not been able to obtain a suitable betrothal and second because she had dated a Muggle Born boy from Hufflepuff the previous year, her Third Year. Her father had told her as much when he received the sale price of over two thousand Galleons stating at least she was finally worth something to the family.

Natasha Adair was a thirteen year old who had just finished her Second Year. Her father had not told her outright she had been sold off, but she was fairly certain as to why she was. She was over ten years younger than her brother and sister and for as long as she could remember her whole family said she had been a mistake. Her father grumbled about having to pay for her clothes and her tuition when she shouldn't have been born in the first place. Her mother complained that she could not truly entertain as she wanted with a young child to look after, never mind she had been all but raised by her family's elves. It was illegal to kill a magical child, even an unborn one. It seemed to Natasha that she was sold as soon as she could be so they could be rid of her. Both girls Love Bonded to Neville fairly quickly, arguably more quickly than other girls their age. They both told Tracy that it was because as weird as this was, it might be the first time in a long time if ever that they felt truly wanted.

It was not like that for Tracy. She loved her family and was certain they loved her as well. Her trip to Charenwell arguably began when she was sorted into Slytherin House. She was appalled at what went on there. Her first full day at school, a Monday as she remembered, she returned from class to study before dinner and walked into the common room where several older boys and girls were engaged in very public sex acts. That Friday night, she and the other First Year girls were gathered by a Prefect to watch as a Fifth Year Girl was gang raped. They were told that as the victim was neither betrothed nor under any House Protection, she was expected to provide "aid and comfort" to her Housemates and that meant she was expected to have sex with the older boys at the very least whenever they asked. As a Slytherin girl, unless you had some form of social protection, if you refused to volunteer your services, you would still provide those services.

Tracy was not worried. Girls were under blanket protection through the end of Second Year and could not be "broken" for any reticence to perform before their Fifth Year unless Snape said otherwise. Even then, House Davis was sufficiently respected that she was effectively under its protection. Still, it disgusted her to see what her housemates would sink to do. Pansy Parkinson entered Hogwarts betrothed to Draco Malfoy, but as he seemed to like group sex, she had been a part of his orgies since the beginning of Third Year and there was good reason to believe she had slept with at least the Captain of the Quidditch Team as part of Draco's ploy to become Seeker and probably anyone else who could support Draco's schemes including their Head of House. Millicent Bulstrode had begun her Third Year by allowing herself to be gang banged in front of the new First Years then trying to be the first in her year to bang every boy in their House. She had no long term protection. Augusta Runcorn did, but didn't seem to care and since Fourth Year was a regular for the Common Room sex. Daphne Greengrass had no protections, but at least so far had avoided becoming a House Whore. The few boys who tried to force the issue spent time in the Hospital Wing. Daphne was as disgusted with Slytherin as Tracy was and they quickly became close friends. As Daphne could and had easily fought off six or seven boys at a time, Tracy had planned to stick close to her to avoid becoming any kind of object lesson for the lower year girls. Unfortunately, it did not work out that way.

Her life had not gone to hell the morning she arrived in Charenwell. By then, she was not surprised that she had become a Concubine. It seemed inevitable by then. Her life had gone to hell the night of September 2nd, 1995 after her first day back for Fifth Year. She remembered it all too clearly. She received a note to see her Head of House following dinner and dutifully did as she was asked.

"Have a seat, Miss Davis," Professor Snape said as Tracy entered his office just after dinner. She did as she was told. Before she could even register what was happening, before she could even gasp, his wand was on her and he silently cast the Petrification Charm. "I regret that was necessary," he said, "but I want you to listen closely and I have found young women like you are not inclined to under these circumstances." He rolled up his left sleeve and showed her

what looked like a vile tattoo on his forearm. It looked like a skull with a snake slithering out from the mouth. "Do you know what this is?" he said slowly.

"A Dark Mark?" Tracy replied surprised that she could speak at all as she surely could not move.

"Indeed. All summer long the Ministry and Daily Prophet have been doing their best to convince us all that the Dark Lord has not returned. Aside from Dumbledore and Potter, whom they have gone out of their way to discredit, there are others who know that the Ministry is fooling itself. The Dark Lord has indeed returned. I know it. The other Death Eaters know it. And ... your father knows it, although he has yet to have the pleasure of the Dark Lord's presence and, I dare say, he would rather never have such pleasure, hence the reason you're here."

"You're a Death Eater? Does the Headmaster know?"

"I prefer not to be interrupted! But to humor you, yes I am a Death Eater and have been since 1978. The Headmaster is as aware as I am that no Death Eater can ever truly stop being one or willingly turn his back on the Dark Lord or his plans. But, as I am useful to both sides, the Headmaster considers my affiliation of little moment. My role has always been to see the Dark Lord return. There were some who might think I've worked actively to forestall it. But when I did, it was because his method of return at that time was both foolhardy and destined to fail. He was displeased until I explained myself.

"As I was saying, your father is aware of the Dark Lords return. As before, the Dark Lord would prefer that a venerable Pureblood family such as the Davis family would be eager to side with him, but he is aware that not everyone will take that step. But, he expects something in order for your family to avoid being classified as Blood Traitors or, should I say, he is willing for some minor concessions or humiliations to suffice rather than submit a neutral family to the tender mercies of some of his less restrained followers. In the case of your family, that minor payment is you.

"He wants me?" Tracy said in a panic.



"Not directly. No, he considers payment in full to be the transfer of your magical guardianship from your father to me. Your father's other options were a 6,000 Galleon 'Neutrality Tax' or the elimination of his entire line. Transfer of your Magical Guardianship to the Head of Slytherin House was a small price to pay in the end as one of the other options was impossible for him and the other unthinkable. The only promises asked of me were not to marry you off to a Death Eater or a possible Death Eater and not to allow you to become one."

Tracy relaxed. Then Snape strode forward, forced her mouth open – as she could barely stop him from doing so due to the spell he had cast – and one by one drew three vials from his robes, opened them and poured them down her throat. She could not help but swallow each. Snape returned to his desk, placed each vial in plain view and looked at her as if questioningly.

"I am not to marry you to a Death Eater nor allow you to become one," he said with a slight sneer. "Even with the restrictions placed upon me by magic and by law, that leaves ... a lot of interesting options. I am sure you do not know what potions I gave you. I am sure because they are of my own creation. I am also fairly certain you are curious. Anyone would be."

"This first potion is very interesting. Like some lust potions, it can be keyed to a specific person, in this case myself. But it is not a lust potion. No, this potion is a loyalty potion. It conceivably will last forever, although in reality it will last so long as there is some form of magical bond or promise between us; in this case the oaths associated with my assumption of guardianship. Should I allow you to bond with another wizard, this potion will lose its effect. But as it makes you loyal to me, you will not be able to escape my control for you may not offer yourself as consort or wife without violating your loyalty to me."

"This second potion can also be keyed to a specific person. I like to think it's ingenious for it acts similar to the Imperious Curse. I cannot make you kill unless you would be willing to do so nor harm another unless you are so inclined, but that leaves a lot of interesting options. You will be taking this potion every other week to ensure its potency."

and, as you are now loyal to me, if for some reason I forget to offer you your booster potion, you will make it a point to remind me.

"This third potion is somewhat mind altering or, to be more precise personality altering although in my experience the only one who will know that there's been a change is you. It will make you accept all that follows without question or mental or emotional resistance. Deep down, you will remain yourself. But whatever you feel or believe will not rise to a level that will allow you to act on that. Again, you will take a booster every two weeks.

"Finite!" Snape said releasing the spell, "and remain seated."

Tracy complied. She did not want to, but she could not resist the command.

"You will tell no one of this meeting, what you were or will be told nor what has or may happen to you, do you understand?"

Tracy nodded. She had a very good idea where this was leading and wanted nothing to do with it, but could not do anything.

"As you may or may not be aware," Snape continued, "I ... maintain two or three upper year girls as my personal ... toys. This is in addition to the two Concubines I possess. Becoming my toy is usually the price they agree to for their Prefect status. No. Miss Parkinson has not cut that deal for her badge, but that is because she is both betrothed and it has proven unnecessary as Mr. Malfoy has been more than willing to loan her to me since she surpassed her bonding age. While I appreciate the loan of her services, for my purposes I prefer an unprotected witch whose services do not require me to seek anyone's permission. Miss Bulstrode would have had this ... honor ... but for my purposes she is not pretty enough as my ... toys ... among other things ... are expected to use their bodies to placate my ingredient suppliers from time to time and they prefer more attractive females. That leaves either you or Miss Greengrass. I need not explain which one of you won the draw."

Tracy gulped.

"I prefer my toys to be ... broken in. As you are probably aware, sometime this week the Seventh Years will provide their object lesson for the edification of our new First Year girls. You will be that lesson. You will allow them to seize you and take you in the Common Room until they tire of you. You shall make a show of resistance, if so inclined, but you may not resist in a way that will harm your assailants or prevent them from taking you or bending you to their will or desires, do you understand?"

Tracy nodded.

"When they are finished with you, you will return here where I will determine the scope of your skills. You will reside here for the rest of your time at Hogwarts although access to your room here will be from your room in Slytherin House. You will go to your room there, lock the door as most of the older girls do and step through your wardrobe which will bring you here and it is here you will sleep, at least when you're not needed for my entertainment or the entertainment of those I allow. This will allow me to ensure you are properly skilled for my purposes and it will ensure that I and I along control access to you and your skills. Be that as it may, I can state that you will probably come to ... know ... most if not all the Slytherin boys over the remainder of your time here and yes, that means the First and Second Year boys as well as you and my other two toys are to train them in how to take pleasure from a female..."

Fifth Years and above in Slytherin were allowed their own rooms if they wanted. It was not required of them. They were also allowed to have a roommate or roommates and as a Fifth Year or above, the House did not consider it necessary to separate boys from girls with respect to living accommodations at night. Tracy had planned to room with Daphne, but Snape had vetoed the idea and now she knew why.

Thus began the worst year imaginable. Despite what Snape had said, it was over a week before the eight Seventh Year boys decided it was time to make an example of her; a week of walking through the Common Room after dinner where couples or groups were busy copulating and knowing at any moment she was going to be gang raped in front of an audience. Each evening when she made it safely to her room made the next even more dreadful. It was almost a relief

when it finally happened, but it was still horrible in all respects as she was taken every way a woman could be taken by all of the Seventh Year boys and a few of the Sixth Years thrown in for good measure.

She knew her friend Daphne had passed by as it was happening. There was nothing Daphne could do for her at that point as she had already been thoroughly violated and had she tried to stop it she might wind up in the same horrible fix. Daphne tried to be there for her afterwards, but Tracy could not tell her about what went on beyond what Daphne had seen for herself. She could not tell her about what happened at night in Snape's "playpen" and how she was forced to "service" all the boys in her House or how she was ordered to spend nights in the boys' dormitories for year-by-year gang bangs or that she was now an occasional guest slag for Malfoy and his shag club. She could not tell her that Snape violated her several times a week or that apparently Mr. Filch was a frequent visitor to her bed and the beds of the other two girls. She certainly could not tell her about her visits once or twice a month to the Headmaster's Office where she was expected to service him; especially as for those visits she was always polyjuiced into the form of whatever male student had caught the Headmaster's eye or that he had managed to find a few male students who seemed willing to let the old man have his way with them while she was forced to either watch or help. She could not tell her how Snape had used her and his other two "toys" to keep the Hogwarts High Inquisitor out of Slytherin and Snape's affairs. In many ways, servicing that woman was infinitely worse than getting bugged by the Headmaster. Nor could she tell Daphne how she was expected to spend her Sundays in a room over the Hogshead Tavern servicing whomever Snape felt needed service. Twice a day, she was supervised either by Snape or one of his other "toys" in ensuring she attained her female release. She was made to play with herself as they watched. Her Fifth Year became humiliation after humiliation, yet outwardly, thanks to Snapes Potion cocktail, no one aside from her "customers" was the wiser.

The more she read about the bonds, the more she realized that Snape's cocktail was many times worse than being a First Stage Concubine. The firsthand accounts of that bond from girls whose lives were at least as bad as Tracy's told her that the bond in many ways separates the mind from the body. The mind could rebel. The body

would not and regardless of what the mind wanted, sex at the behest of or with the bondmate usually ended in an orgasm for the Concubine. That was almost never the case on Snape's cocktail. Even in the mind, many First Stage Concubines soon came to accept their fate. Again, this was attributed to the Bond. Such was not the case under Snape. It almost came as no surprise when that horrible year ended and Snape told her the night before she went home to her family, who were also kept in the dark about what had happened, that as her Magical Guardian he would be selling her off to the highest bidder that summer. It was a last torment, for until she was summoned to become Neville's, she had no idea for certain if she had been sold or to whom.

The "orientation" she had received when she arrived and before she was even told who she was to be bound to had provided her with a glimmer of hope. She wanted to believe that the nightmare was over. She wanted to believe that her Bondmate would treat her like a friend, wife and lover and not an object. She wanted to believe she had a chance to be a person again and to have some semblance of the life she had once hoped to have. Her bonding with Neville had been wonderful and as a result, she was willing to believe and that, she felt, was why she had taken that leap of faith to push this bond to conclusion as soon as possible. That night, she told Neville all that she could about the last year. She was afraid it might put him off or worse, that he might treat her the way she had been treated. Neither happened.

Tracy lay in Neville's arms crying after telling him about what had happened to her the past year. "I ... I'd understand," she whimpered, "I'd understand if you wanted to get rid of me now."

"Why would I want to do that?" Neville asked. "Because of what you were made to do?"

Tracy nodded into his chest.

"I'd be a bloody hypocrite if I did that," Neville said.

"Oh?"

"Six of my other ladies were Concubines for at least a year before they came to me: Amber, Penny, Annette, Debbie, Miriam and Amanda. They were all forced by their bond to do things like that. I can't fault them for what their bond forced them to do. I can't fault you for what those potions made you do. So far as I'm concerned, what happened before you came to me is not important. I know it hurt you. But that life is over. According to the others, they don't even dream about that life anymore – not since they bonded with me. This is your life now. As far as I'm concerned you're my wife just as much as Susan and the others are and when you're ready you will also be a mother to our children..."

"Children?"

Neville chuckled. "It seems that my ladies all want more than one ... more than two actually. When and how many are up to you. Now what happened to you is important. The Duke's Chief of Security will want to know the details – including names of any who violated you..."

"Why?"

"So we can kill them when the time comes," Neville said as if it was nothing. "Also, the Duchess will probably ask for a recounting of your experiences both before and after you bonded with me. I don't know how graphic she wants it, but she and others are working on a book about these bonds and about Covens and Coven magic. Apparently no one bothered to study this before."

"Covens?"

"Yep. We don't tell you about that beforehand. The British Magicals consider it Dark Magic. We know it's only dark if the Coven itself is dark and the five Covens here are anything but dark.

"We're still learning about Covens. We know a Coven forms when a wizard is magically bound to enough witches. This means Love Bonded and in the basic Concubine Bond the witch is bound to the wizard and not the other way around. But we think the magic can begin to form without that step if all of the witches have strong

feelings for the wizard and he for them. Once the Coven forms, everyone is magically bound to all the other members of the Coven."

"Is that why they were – um – with each other and with me during the bonding?" Tracy asked.

"We think so. It seems that within a Coven sexual intimacy knows no specific partner. Having sex with me is not really different than having sex with any of the other bondmates, aside from the equipment and the obvious potential after effects. I know that if my girls are not in my bed, they're in bed with each other and they are not particular with their bed partners. I also know that we are attracted that way to each other, but not to anyone else.

"Susan and I chose to be together. She became my Consort on July 1st, the afternoon before we came here. She knew I had inherited Amber from my father. At the time we had no idea my parents could be cured and House Longbottom passed to me that night. She insisted I bond with Amber as well as I've known Amber my entire life and Amber was my first real friend despite the age difference. When we learned of the others, including you, she agreed we should take you in as well. We chose you over a month ago and knew you'd be joining us. At that time, we had no idea about Covens.

"The Pureblood Elites believe that their way is the best way for magic. It's all rubbish, you know."

Tracy nodded.

"The truth is that Covens may be better, especially if you live in a society with far more witches than wizards. We think that was among the reasons why the Concubine Bond was invented."

"Why are Covens better?"

"First of all, the bond helps us work together for the benefit of our family. There are no petty jealousies or ambitions within the family. I'm not saying there's no ambition, but such ambition is for the family and not the individual in many ways. That means we get along. We do have our arguments and do disagree. It doesn't make us

subservient, mindless, opinion-less sheep. But things never get to heated.

"Second, the bond allows us to share our magic in many ways. What's even more brilliant, if one of us has a magical ability or knows a spell that no one else in the Coven can do, we all can develop that ability very quickly. So far, we've just used it to learn spells and such which means we might well get our NEWTs and such early even with all that's going on. We know it works for spells. We think it may work for other things like apparition and animagus transformations and such. Once one of us can do that, the rest can follow in short order."

"Wow!"

"Third, there's a maturation process at least for you girls. We've set the age of Permission at fifteen..."

"Bit young, don't you think?"

"It would be if the fifteen year old is fifteen in all respects. She's not. Emotionally at first and then physically, she will mature towards the Coven average. For my house, it means within a few months or less you will be emotionally at least seventeen and a half. The same will apply to any of the girls under that age and we then think the maturation will slow, but continue faster than normal until you reach an emotional age around twenty-one. You will also mature physically at a faster rate for now and will probably be physically around eighteen in a year or so. The younger girls will take a little longer. The girls who are over eighteen are going to get younger physically until they are around that age, we think. We already see that happening in another Coven, one which has a few ladies over the age of thirty and sourced the girls have found state that this will extend the life expectancy of the older witches. All of this means a far greater likelihood of healthy and very magical children. The sources have reported not one single case of a Squib born to a Coven. Although we don't think it extends fertility"

"Meaning?"



"A witch – any woman really – is born with all the eggs, all the possible chances of a child she will ever have. Every month you have your ... um ... female issues..."

Tracy giggled at that.

"... you release at least one of those eggs and unless it becomes a child, it's gone forever, never to be replaced. A witch who's almost out of those eggs may become physically younger in a Coven, but we're pretty sure she'll never get those eggs back. Still..."

Tracy thought for a moment. "But if I get older sooner, won't I die sooner?"

"Aside from the troubles back home which could be fatal, we don't think so."

"It almost makes last year worth it," Tracy sighed.

"A few of the girls who went through hell before have said something like that," Neville said. "I'd like to think there's some truth in that."

Tracy had been thinking about how much her life had really changed in the last week since she arrived here. A week ago, she lived in a state of constant dread knowing she was to become a Concubine before the summer was over. Now she lived in almost perpetual hope for her future. She knew this was not unique. Every one of the girls in her Coven whom she had managed to speak to at length had similar feelings about their new life. Teresa and Natasha had walked in during her musings. She knew Teresa was pleased with the way things had worked out for her, although there was no way she ever wanted her former family to know that. Tracy wanted her family to know and was promised they would be invited to move here soon. She did not know how Natasha felt about this new life, but judging by the girl's smile, it was probably sooner.

"You lot ready?" a voice called from the doorway.

Tracy looked up and saw...

"Daphne!" She jumped up and ran to her best friend and hugged her.  
"What're you doing here? And what's your sister Story doing here?"

"We're here to take you lot shopping, of course."

"No. I mean why are you two here in Charenwell?"

"It should be rather obvious," Daphne deadpanned. "We got lucky. The Death Eaters forced our Daddy to sell us into what became a Coven. I'm now a Black and Story's a Potter. We're both bound to Harry, Duke of Charenwell." She then proceeded to tell her friend and the others how that came to pass. When she finished she added. "So, you lot ready to shop until you drop?"

It was definitely worth it, Tracy thought as she and the others followed their former Housemates out for a day in Pottersport.

A/N: The Turners might show up from time to time. They're not major characters. They're here to provide a form of disinterested perspective on things. Hestia might be more important...  
Oh... and I am still working on Life Sucks...

#### RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, SI – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.

(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

No changes from last posted list – see end of Chapter 66 for last post, Chapter 64 for last full posting and next Chapter for next full posting.

HOUSE BLACK

No changes from last posting.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

No changes from last posting.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

18. Teresa Chastain (Murdoch) Longbottom, age 14 (SI-3).

19. Natasha Brianna (Adair) Longbottom, age 13 (4/12/83) (SI-2); Concubine Neville (8/16/96).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

No changes from last post.

George Weasley, age 18.

No changes from last post.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

10. Coleen Michelle Greer, age 20 (12/20/75) (SP-5); Original Bond (7/27/92); Concubine Remus (8/15/96).

11. Alive Lynn Ives, age 20 (1/21/76) (SA-5); Original Bond (8/3/92); Concubine Remus (8/16/96).

12. Greta Mae Ives, age 17 (8/21/79) (SA-5); Original Bond (7/21/95); Concubine Remus (8/16/96).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

10. Francine Katherine Moore, age 24 (6/20/72) (PE-6); Original Bond (7/16/88); Concubine Frank (8/15/96).

11. Tamara Yvonne Faust, age 22 (10/19/73) (SD-5); Original Bond (8/7/90); Concubine Frank (8/16/96).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

3. Lisa Faith (Stuart) Weasley, age 23 (SA).

4. Janice Amelia (Brooks) Weasley, age 22 (SG-5).

5. Pamela Hope (Brooks) Weasley, age 18 (SG-5).

6. Tonya Louise Childs, age 21 (12/20/74) (SD-5); Original Bond (8/5/91); Concubine Charlie (8/15/96).

7. Lauren Noel Ellis, age 20 (7/21/76) (PE-5); Original Bond (8/13/92); Concubine Charlie (8/16/96).

8. Mary Louisa Ellis, age 17, (8/5/79) (PE-5); Original Bond (7/27/95); Concubine Charlie (8/16/96).

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).

4. Emma Lucile Dawson, age 23 (2/7/73) (SD); Original Bond (7/16/78); Concubine Arthur (8/15/96).

5. Anna Justine Marsh, age 21 (11/7/74) (SG-5); Original Bond (8/20/90); Concubine Arthur (8/16/96).

6. Constance Maria Marsh, age 18 (8/1/94) (SG-5); Original Bond (8/16/96); Concubine Arhtur (8/16/96).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE: THE FORGOTTEN ONES

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18th, 1996, North Umbria England, about ten miles north of Hadrian's Wall.

Rubeus Hagrid had been wrongfully expelled from Hogwarts during his third year at Hogwarts back in 1943. By all rights and by custom, in addition to forever losing the legal right to carry and use a wand, he should never have remained in Hogsmeade Valley much less at Hogwarts. But one Albus Dumbledore had seemed to pity the large half-giant orphan and, by fortuitous circumstances, the school was in needs of a game keeper and this was before there even was a dangerous colony of acromantulas residing in the forest. The Care of Magical Creatures professor had recommended Hagrid for such a position even before he had been framed for the murder of a Muggle Born girl as the large boy seemed to have a knack for magical creatures.

Thus it was that Hagrid took up residence in a ruined farmer's hut on the edge of the forest and spent the next fifty years or so as games keeper keeping an eye on the creatures in the forest and keeping the more dangerous ones away from the school grounds proper. When Dumbeldore succeeded Professor Dippet as Headmaster, Hagrid became his trusted errand boy. It had been easy for Dumbledore to control Hagrid as he was far more trusting and far more grateful than many would have been under similar circumstances. A brighter, more suspicious and less trusting person would have questioned the expulsion and maybe questioned why he was being allowed to stay when anyone who knew anything about the school's history knew that no one had been allowed to do so before. But Hagrid never questioned the "great man" who had 'trusted" and "believed" him when no one else had.

But Hagrid also had a huge heart and hundreds of students who passed through the doors of Hogwarts over the previous fifty-three years knew this. Even Harry and Hermione could understand Hagrid's need to take care of his full Giant brother Grawp, even if they were reluctant to be anywhere near the giant. Perhaps Hagrid was not all trusting, for he never had told Dumbledore about Grawp prior to the previous Monday, over nine months after the giant came

to live in the forest. When it came to his half-kin, even Hagrid could be capable of distrust. He knew that wizards at best looked down on giant kind and, for the most part, giants of this age were entirely what wizards and made of them. Hagrid's father knew far more about giants than most any wizard in a thousand years or more. He knew their lore and was disgusted by the wretched state they had been reduced to after centuries of persecution by wizards.

Wizards saw giants as dumb, vicious brutes who were nothing but a danger to mankind. Then again, the family dog can turn on its owner if sufficiently provoked and wizards had been slaughtering giants for centuries. They actually celebrated the death of the last known giant in Britain. There had been a bounty on each giant killed and wizards did not distinguish between the few giants who really were dangerous and the vast majority who merely wished to be left in peace. During the height of the Giant purges, wizards deliberately targeted giant children and especially infants. A fully grown, healthy giant was hard to kill. But their children were another matter and if they could not breed, they could not survive. It is little wonder they became increasingly vicious over time and little wonder why at least a few of them would jump at the opportunity to attack humans especially if they were given a free pass by supposedly supportive wizards. Few of the giant mercenaries over the centuries ever survived their tenure. Once the giants had done their new ally's bidding, invariably the new ally turned on them and killed them.

In ancient times, long before Hogwarts was founded, Giants were truly a race unto themselves. They were farmers and herders, content to mind their livestock and tend their fields and stay out of the affairs of the little people and, for the most part, they could. Humans, even magical ones, were little threat to them and they had little desire for contact. But human populations expand far more rapidly than that of the giants and sooner or later, even the marginal lands giants preferred for their communities became coveted by humans for farms, pastures and other human pursuits and humans were not inclined to share. The giants were pushed off their lands, driven like game before the hounds into more and more desolate areas where there was less and less to support them and their families. With the scarcity of food they had little choice than result to a form of brigandage and plunder upon the humans and each other. Their predations provoked

response which reduced their numbers, drove disparate clans to fight each other for control of what little remained to them and inspired them to react to humans with violence, thus repeating the cycle.

But as a race Giants were not dumb. Given an opportunity, they could be quiet intelligent and were always quick learners. The reason humans in general and wizards in particular thought otherwise had to do with language and magic. Giants never took to writing. Then again, for the human race writing was a very recent invention and literacy beyond a select few even more recent. Yet the lack of a written language suggested inferiority even to those humans who themselves were illiterate. To humans, giants were incomprehensible speaking a language that sounded like occasional grunts and growls; assuming it was a language at all, which many wizards doubted. Sure, a Giant could understand a little of a human tongue. Then again so could a dog. The truth was that the giants had very well developed languages, but given their immense size, the sounds were so deep that they fell below the threshold of human hearing. In warmer climes, giants were very successful elephant herders because elephants could understand them and giants could hear the full range of elephant calls. In ancient times, giant bards told their sagas, passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. Few of the sagas had survived the human persecutions which drove clans apart and disparate survivors together in groups where few spoke a common language.

Hagrid knew this. His father had invented a spell that allowed him to hear the full range of giant speak which, in turn had allowed him to learn at least two of the surviving giant languages. To humans, giants appeared to be lazy, chewing their cud and grunting for hours on end. To giants, they were a very talkative race. What humans saw as sloth and signs of gluttony – a brute of a being chewing without pause but for an occasional grunt – was actually a lengthy discourse or perhaps an epic poem. The giants, who watched humans stare dumbly as they tried to speak with the little people, believed humans to be more dimwitted than their herds of cattle. But for their magic and their weapons, humans were of little real concern considering how unintelligent they were as a group.

It was through this spell that Hagrid's father had learned the Kazchkakil dialect, which he believed was the more expressive and certainly the more poetic of the giant tongues he encountered and certainly the best language for wooing a giant maiden, which he did and Hagrid was the result. Hagrid's mother Fridwulfa had been the daughter of Malek, a lesser chieftain of the Kazchkakils of the Western Islands (Britain). The clan had been driven out of their homelands in the desolate places of the British Isles in the early part of the century and scattered into the vastness of the Eurasian landmass but they remained the largest surviving giant culture on earth with a common language and legends. Hagrid told his human friends that his mother left because he was small for a giant. He knew this was not true. She left to find her people and this was why she had left Grawp as well. Grawp had tried to accept the ways of the collection of disparate giants in the eastern mountains and had become too wild to trust, in his mother's opinion. At the time, Grawp thought his mother was a fool. Just before he left Hogwarts, Grawp told Hagrid their mother had been right all along. The Kazchkakils were gathering once again. The horn had sounded. They were gathering to search for a new homeland and Grawp intended to rejoin his people.

As a young lad, Hagrid had begun learning Kazchkakil from his mother Fridwulfa. According to his dad, his first word was Kaskas, which was similar to "Mama." It was only after Fridwulfa left them that the boy began to learn English and the fact that his dad had written works on the Kazchkakil language and what legends he had learned from that people and his wife, that Hagrid was able to remember his people's tongue. It was this knowledge of giant speech that almost won the giants over to Dumbledore. Half giants such as Hagrid and Madam Maxine could hear the low frequency tones that constituted the bulk of giant speech even though their deep voices sounded like a baby's cooing to a giant. But while Madam Maxine was part Uzkarra giant, she never learned the language of that side of her family. There were eight Kazchkakils in that encampment of seventy some giants in the remote mountains and Hagrid had tried to convince all eight to come back to Scotland with him. While all eight left with him, only his brother traveled the full distance.



Unfortunately for Grawp, Scotland was not the paradise Hagrid described. Hagrid was almost as biased as the rest of magical Britain, in no small part to having lived in that world and taught its beliefs and felt that Grawp had to be "trained." Grawp, apparently, put up with the petty humiliations, perhaps because it was Hagrid who was being trained. But the call of the horn had ended the charade and Grawp left to rejoin his people. For Hagrid, he feared for his brother. A giant on his own in Britain was in grave danger, or so Hagrid thought. Now, as Hagrid made camp just after sunrise some two hundred or so miles south of Hogsmeade Valley, he was beginning to question all he had ever been taught.

When Grawp had scampered, Hagrid had assumed the giant would head east to the coast and swim for the Continent. Hagrid already knew giants could swim great distances if they had the need as he had quite literally rode Grawp across the North Sea to Britain. He also assumed a large, eighteen foot tall giant would stick to the valleys and passes. Hogsmeade was situated in a long valley bounded by tall, steep sided mountains that rose some five hundred and more meters above valley floor. Few who lived there ever bothered to try and cross the mountains on foot without a trail to follow. Grawp headed almost due south on a course that seldom deviated due to the mountains and ridges in his path. His course would alter for a lower pass or saddle in the ridge rather than go right over the top, but he made no effort to find an easier way and to Hagrid, it did not seem to matter.

As a games keeper, Hagrid was an adept tracker and his boarhound Fang could follow scent trails many of the best hounds would have lost. Hagrid had figured it would be easy to track a giant. Giant slaying guides spoke of a swath of torn up ground, trees, buildings and such as typical of a giant's trail. There was no such thing. Hagrid had to search for the faintest signs of disturbance to follow the path. There was an occasional partial print on soft ground, maybe a disturbed patch of grass where the soil was all but non-existent or an occasional patch of rock where the moss had clearly been wiped off recently. It took all his skill, even across the open moors, to follow the faint trail of his brother. Moreover, his brother was moving south far more swiftly than Hagrid had anticipated and he had to move at least fifteen miles as the hippogriff flew each day over the mountains and valleys just to keep pace, it seemed. There was no path of

destruction and barely any sign that the giant had passed through at all, but two things were clear. Grawp was moving south, for some reason, and at high speed and he seemed to be a master of concealment. His path varied only to skirt farms, villages and towns. Hagrid was certain Grawp was moving by night for it would be hard to hide an eighteen foot giant crossing an open moor or field in daylight. For now, the days were longer than the nights and Hagrid moved south as fast as he could while keeping to the hint of a trail from sun up to sun down and still it did not seem as if he was any closer to catching his brother.

"Why south?" Hagrid asked. It made no sense. Hagrid and Fang had crossed into England proper that morning in pursuit. Once they had cleared the high, steep mountains, the pace had picked up and was now over forty miles a day. For England, the path they seemed to be following through North Umbria towards western Yorkshire was not densely populated, but Hagrid knew this would soon change as they approached the Midlands and the lands further to the south. It would have made sense for Grawp and his people to move north into the far less densely populated lands of Scandinavia, not the heart of one of the most densely populated lands in Europe. What was there to the South? Hagrid did not think that Grawp was bent on destruction. He had avoided more than a few ripe opportunities on his trek south thus far. But this path made no sense whatsoever.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19th, 1996 – Office of the Duke, Black House, Charenwell.

This Monday had begun as a good day for Harry. He had no bondings in his schedule which, while he enjoyed them, had always been stressful as he never knew how the new girls would handle it. The fact that most of them handled it quite well did not make a new bonding any easier for him. He was thankful it would be a few years before there would be another one, his last. Gabrielle had returned from France with trunks and trunks of things and had been far more talkative than she was before even if she still was rattling along in French. From Harry's perspective, even though new families would be arriving at the Manors, at least he did not have to go through with meeting new in-laws today although he was scheduled to take the Grangers, Bells and Plumbers out as part of the evenings' three

double dates. He was dining with Hermione and Katie, Luna and Connie, Cathy and Cissy that night or nights.

Monday was, as usual, the morning when Mallory and now Madam Pomfrey announced the pregnancy results. Luna had been right as she was expecting twins, a boy and a girl as she had suspected. She could be uncanny that way although she admitted she was a long way from proposing any names. Among the other five who learned what they were going to have, the loudest applause was for Alice Longbottom as Neville was to have a little brother sometime in April. This Monday was not as prolific as the previous one as there were only fifteen new members of the Baby Boom Club among them was Harry's classmate Mandy Brocklehurst. Harry had to wait three minutes longer than he had hoped to learn who if any of his ladies were expecting while Lavender Brown did her happy dance around the Dining Room. For Harry, he could now add Katie, Padma and Parvati to the list of springtime mothers.

It was his first time through Monday, which meant this day was his "Duke Day." Following Breakfast, he walked to his new office in Black House, sat at his desk and turned on his computer. He still was trying to learn how to use it. Dudley had a computer back in Little Whinging, but Harry had never been allowed to use it and of course there were no such devices at Hogwarts. He knew that for the moment, aside from watching the thing come on, he would not delve any further into this mystery as in a moment Cissy would enter to discuss his schedule and what he needed to do as Duke today. Sure enough, there was a knock at his door. Cissy entered with a few files in her arms which she placed on his desk.

"An office day?" Harry asked.

"Today and tomorrow," Cissy said. "Wednesday you have a meeting at Gringotts with Bill Weasley. The Goblins have requested a meeting about their new bank branches and ... and other matters of mutual interest, Bill said. It's scheduled for Thursday and Bill wants a day to go over protocol and background the day before."

"I guess I need to learn that stuff sometime," Harry resigned.

"As I recall, you did quite well at the reading of Sirius's Will," Cissy said, "but it helps to be prepared with them."

"So there's Goblin stuff in these files?"

"No. This is other stuff. There are reports on the evacuation and from Economic Affairs regarding job placement and job placement services for our new residents, a few other reports on what all is happening in Britain, an initial analysis from the Foreign Office regarding the Irish developments and something from Hermione." Cissy seemed to blush at the last statement.

Harry nodded. "You do realize I've been Duke for almost two months and the furthest from West Farm I've traveled is to Jamestown and the Air Base. One of these days I'll need to go to North Farm, East Farm and Port of Darby."

"You were in London less than two weeks ago."

"That was different," Harry said. "That was a mission. I can't be much of a Duke if I haven't seen the country, can I? Port of Darby is our largest city right now and I'd like to say I was there before Jamestown surpasses it."

"We could try to work a trip or two for next week," Cissy said. "The Lord Mayor suggested that your first trip there should include a tour of The Landing."

"The Landing?"

"It's on the North Coast. It's where the first settlers landed and established the first community here. I'm told it's now an archeological site as it was abandoned over a thousand years ago in favor of Port of Darby and Pottersport but all school children here get a trip to it."

"Sounds interesting although Hermione will probably be more excited about that."

"This is your heritage, Harry."

"I know, Cissy. And as I've said before, I should be learning about it from now until I'm about twice your age and not adding to it for ages; aside from heirs and such I guess."

"We all understand this is a little overwhelming..."

"A little?"

Cissy shrugged. "I think I can speak for all of us who're sharing this adventure with you, Harry. You're doing a wonderful job. I hope to learn I'm adding to your legacy – at least as Lord Black – next Monday but I can say this: If our child is anything like you, I would be the proudest mother in Charenwell." There was a sadness in her tone.

"He was not your fault," Harry said. Neither of them spoke the name of her former son.

"I know. Still..."

"You have a second chance, Cissy."

"And I thank you. Now, we also have a file here from the British Army Mission. Oh, they'd like you to stop by tomorrow – the real tomorrow – after your flight training to attend the commissioning of Colonel Granger. I'm sure Hermione will make sure it's on your Training Day schedule. The file is their training schedule for our Army. They say that they can begin training as early as next week with some four hundred recruits divided into two groups. They would like to include any recruits from the evacuation who are willing to start that early."

"I don't see a problem with that," Harry said.

"We also have an interesting report from intelligence regarding something we may have missed in identifying the at-risk population."

"Given how fast we're moving, I would have been surprised if we thought of everything. What's Hermione want?" he added picking up a file. He opened the file and saw on the top sheet a number "8/24" followed by ten names beginning with Hermione's.

8/24 Hermione Granger, Luna Lovegood, Susan Bones, Fleur Delacour, Alicia Spinnet, Angeline Johnson, Stephanie Riley, Tatiana Ivanova, Dora Tonks, Amber Harker

8/25 Mallory Grant, Minerva McGonagall, Penelope Clearwater, Mary Ellen Howard, Verity Smith, Danielle Carter, Shelly Parker, Georgina Parker, Amelia Carpenter, Veronica Riordan

8/31 Daphne Greengrass, Astoria Greengrass, Miriam Riley, Lana Powell, Carla Masterson, Vicki Peters, Rachel Peters, Ellen North, Sarah Hanson, Sandra Butler

9/1 Ginny Weasley, Katie Bell, Annette Harper, Deborah McLean,

Samantha Johnson, Donna Roselle, Coleen Harrington, Anna Jenkins, Roberta Larson, Gretchen St. James

9/7 Hannah Abbott, Pattie Abbott, Peggy Nolan, Elizabeth Nolan, Elisha Stout, Eileen O'Malley, Tara Marks, Marie White, Christi Matthews, Carol Timmerman

9/8 Stacey Campbell, Karen Green, Amanda Kennedy, Leanne Tinker, Christine Paulson, Mandy Brocklehurst, Caroline Folsom, Isabelle Tate, Helen Ivey, Tammy Grey

9/14 Padma Patil, Parvati Patil, Lavender Brown, plus 7 unknown

9/15 Annette Barnes, Pamela Adams, Selene Adams, plus 7 unknown

"What's this?" Harry asked.

"Um ... well it's a list of dates with names after them," Cissy said obviously avoiding the question.

"Okay, why is next Saturday so important to Hermione, Luna, Dora, Neville's Amber and the other Consorts and why isn't Neville's Mum on this list given all the other Consorts are there? Why another list for

Sunday and every weekend for the next month or so and why are the last two dates with six or seven unknowns?"

"Um..."

"Cissy..." Harry growled.

"They're proposed wedding dates," Cissy began.

"Weddings? What the bloody hell for? We're already married and stuff and how am I supposed to do two or three a day and am I supposed to be at the other ones?"

"Yes, aside from the girls who have not yet bonded, we're all already married by virtue of our bonds, at least in the eyes of magic. But you did promise us weddings as I recall."

"I did, didn't I?" Harry replied with a sigh.

"And weddings are not about the groom for certain. It's special for the bride or brides but it's mostly about family and friends."

"But this list is hardly everyone. You're not on it, for example."

"I'm not pregnant yet," Cissy said. "Hermione and the rest of us are in agreement that those who are pregnant go first. We all want to be married before it is obvious that we are expecting."

"Astoria's on the list! She's not pregnant!"

"Sisters will marry together in a double ceremony. In fact the plan is that in addition to sisters, those ladies without family will marry in a double ceremony with a friend which is what will happen for Luna and Minerva, for example. Hermione insisted on having Luna with her as the other bride and while Minerva claims it's not important to her, Mallory insisted on having their wedding together."

"And you?"

Cissy shrugged. "I do have family here, Harry. You forget Andy, Ted and Dora...you and your sister."

"Sorry. But what about some of these others? They're not all double weddings! And how can we have five or more weddings a day?"

"Hermione's planned for five separate venues," Cissy said. "There will be a tent down by Longbottom Lake, the Courtyard of Longbottom House, the Veranda of Potter Manor, the Ballroom in Longbottom House and a tent on the West Lawn. The weddings will begin as early as noon, depending upon how many there really are on any given day. The ceremony will be a half hour in length and there will be fifteen minutes between ceremonies to allow people to move from one venue to the next. Keep in mind, not everyone will attend all the weddings. There will be a joint banquet, reception and ball beginning at seven, fifteen minutes following the last wedding it will last until at least midnight. Now, as for you, you do have your time turner as do all the Heads of Houses now so you can be in more than one place at a time. Wedding dresses can be transfigured into something else so a bride can be a guest or bridesmaid or whatnot without having to change and then it can be restored to a wedding dress for the reception. It's a little tight, but we believe it's manageable."

Harry nodded. "Will there be a problem with two or three of me out and about?"

"The guests will know what to expect about that. Consider the benefits! There'll be one of you for each of your brides – at least at the reception – and a spare to dance with the rest of us and be sociable."

"Actually, if there're three of me, five or more weddings a day won't be that difficult," Harry thought.

"That's the idea!"

"But only five venues?"



"There will be time for the elves to redecorate after a venue is used for a later wedding."

"The first weddings are in less than a week!" Harry observed.

"Most of the plans for those are done or mostly done. The brides' mothers, at least those who are here, are tinkering with them. And before you ask, this schedule is such that the families involved who are relocating to Charenwell will be here in plenty of time for their family member's wedding."

"Guests?"

"Each of the girls are working their lists and the Consorts are working the lists for the grooms. You can bet the other Houses will be there. For your specific guests ... well we're definitely inviting your cousin Samantha and her family, your sister Clarice and her family and ... well it's only proper to invite your Aunt, Uncle, Cousin Dudley and his fiancé and her family. There will be others as well from government and the British Mission, but they will be spread out over the several weeks."

"How long will we be at this?"

"Assuming no delays, it'll be ten weddings a day – or at least ten marriages through Saturday, October 5th and six on October 6th and 12th. Specifically, there'll be nine weddings this Saturday, seven on Sunday, eight on the 31st, ten on the 1st, eight on the 7th, nine on the 8th and after that we'll see."

"I think I'll be sick of weddings before it's over," Harry moped.

"If you try to enjoy yourself it should be fun, but I can see your point. The good news is it'll all be over in less than two months. We're going to try and make sure you're not scheduled to be married on September 7th or the 21st..."

"Why?"

"Cathy and Luna's birthday."

"Oh right. And I have Hermione's on the 19th. Bloody hell, that's two cars!"

"Cars?"

"Every one of my girls gets a car on their sixteenth birthday, or their next birthday if they're over sixteen. You missed Dora's as you were still in the hospital."

Cissy chuckled. "Might have missed her birthday, but no one can miss that pink car! My birthday's March 22nd, if you must know."

"I have a list somewhere," Harry replied. "So, is there anything I have to do to get ready for these weddings?"

"Your attire for each of you will be laid out. All you have to do is get dressed and show up at the right place at the right time. Dobby will be in charge of seeing to that. Aside from that, you'll need to pick two men to stand with you per bride. They don't have to be the same ones all the time. The only ones you should pick today are for your four brides this weekend so we can let them know."

"You need to know now?"

"No. So long as we have your list first for this weekend by the real Tuesday morning we should be fine. That gives you the better part of three days."

Harry nodded. "Oh, could you let Luna know I probably need to schedule a time to meet with my Aunt for certain and maybe my Uncle. Is he still in Hospital?"

"No. He's been discharged. Although I think he's still convalescing."

"Okay. I'd like a meet with them both probably at their place and ... come to think of it there's something here I should probably show my Aunt so two meets before Saturday."

"I'll let Luna know," Cissy said getting up to leave and return to her office to work on schedules and such.

Harry looked at the stack of files before him. He knew he should at least look over all of them at some point and preferably before the next meeting with the group which wrote each one. But to be honest, unless Economic Affairs was having an unanticipated problem with job placement that file could wait. Harry already knew that last week's evacuees, for example, might have to wait two or three months or so for a job. Certain jobs were in immediate demand and not just in the military. Teachers and Healers were needed now as the Primary Schools in Jamestown and Magoran Bay and each was to have its own hospital. While magical could easily travel by floo to Mistress Agnes Hospital in Pottersport, Harry agreed that to require the Muggles to do so was probably not a good idea. One day they might be comfortable with that form of travel, but Harry knew that unlikely. He had been travelling by floo since he was twelve and still was not comfortable with it.

The Army report seemed more interesting in concept. Harry was naturally curious as to how long it would take to ready a combat force of any size and more critically whether and how long it would take to train a force capable of taking Magical Britain, the Death Eaters, Voldemort and all of that down for good. The sooner he had a combat force the better and, if nothing else, he might be able to deploy a force to Ireland while his Army was still preparing for the main event. But the truth was he had little control over how fast a force could be put together. He knew next to nothing about what it takes to build an Air Force where his planes could only be assembled so quickly. He knew less than nothing about raising an army. He would get to this file later.

Cissy had said that in the evacuation planning they overlooked something, at least that's what the intelligence folks were supposedly reporting. That was one thing he might be able to do something about so he opened that folder and began to read.

"You've got to be kidding me," he said as he read. It took him some minutes to read through the initial report about the problem. "No. No. No. No. No! No! NO!" he all but shouted as he slammed the report

onto his desk. He forced himself to calm down a little before pushing the button on his intercom. "Cissy? Could you come in here please?"

He stood and paced as he waited the few seconds for Cissy to come through the door.

"What's wrong, Harry?" she asked as she could tell something had upset him.

"Have you read the report from Intelligence?" he asked.

"I ... I haven't had a chance yet," she began wondering where this was going.

"Here," he said handing her the file. She opened the file and began to read as he continued to pace back and forth.

After a few minutes Cissy looked up. "This is unexpected although it makes sense when you think about it."

"You knew nothing of this?"

"I may have been a part of Pureblood society," Cissy protested, "but this sort of thing is not something that would be discussed in polite circles and it never came up in any political discussions."

"I'm sorry," Harry sighed. "It's just that what are we going to do about this?"

"Well, off hand I'd say the logistics are a bit more of a challenge as this is clearly on the magical side so they might get wind of what we're up to, but with a little planning we could pull it off and none would be the wiser."

"I agree, but that's not what I meant. My immediate concern is Hermione for certain and maybe the others. It'll be the bloody cats all over again!"

"I thought you were okay with the cats."

"Aside from Crookshanks, I don't think the others like me too much and Crooks doesn't really count as he's not all cat to begin with. He's part kneazle."

"They don't dislike you, Harry," Cissy said. "Have any of them hissed at you or scratched you?"

"No."

"They're cats. They are more friendly at first to the person who feeds them. You don't which means for now to them you're not important. I hope your self-worth is not dependent upon whether or not a cat hops in your lap for a pat."

"Okay, bad example," Harry conceded. "I don't want to use the lot of you as an example, but I know what Hermione's gonna say. She's going to either rationalize this or bat her eyes and pout..."

"I doubt she'll do that."

"She hasn't had to with me yet. But she's going to insist we get one and one will become five and five ten and so on! She will argue we have the resources here to deal with this and that's true but... Cissy, we're still working out this whole new life thing! This time next year in addition to the twenty-seven of us there'll be at least twenty-three babies to consider..."

"Twenty-three?"

"Every one of you fifteen and older is either pregnant, trying to become pregnant or will try before this year's out. There are already two known sets of twins. That's twenty-three assuming that there are no other sets of twins and that Astoria waits a bit beyond her fifteenth birthday. She originally promised to wait until after she sat her O.W.L.s, but with the Coven maturation – it was her physical and emotional maturation she had an issue with – she might be inclined to seek permission sooner, especially as we've lowered the age for permissions. That could add at least one more child within the next year or so, again assuming no more twins."

"But I don't see that deterring Hermione! She'll be persistent! And she knows I have an issue with this, one which would make me inclined to agree with her, but I don't think we're ready to take that step."

"You're talking about taking them in?" Cissy asked.

"She'll argue we should take at least some of them. She'll argue we should set an example for others and all of that, but just because you can set an example does not mean you always should. And with this Coven, if the majority side with her I might not have a choice."

"This might fall outside of the Bond, Harry."

"Oh? How?"

"One way or another, this would affect the long term future of Houses Potter and Black, would it not? While the Coven magic is powerful in matters that affect the Coven, this could be something whose effects on Houses Potter and Black would continue long after we're all gone. Those kinds of things, from what I've read, are outside of the Coven and as Head of House are still your prerogative."

"I'd prefer general agreement," Harry said.

"I know, Harry, and from the life I came from that makes you very special. But there are times when you may need to make decisions about the future of your family beyond this Coven where the best decision for the Houses may not be what the majority of us might wish. As Head of the Houses, you should consider the options and we can provide you with them, but the final decision remains yours. If after due consideration you don't think it's right, then it's not right."

"But we have to do something," Harry began.

"We as in Charenwell, Harry; not necessarily we as a family."

Harry sighed. "Two hundred and twenty-four magical orphans and that's just at this place in Manchester."

"Actually, it's more like a hundred ninety-six," Cissy said. "While the sixteen year olds are not of age, they are old enough to enter the work force if they've taken their OWLs. As they have no parents, they can leave school on their own if they so choose."

Harry nodded. "The lot of them would be eligible for military service here. Still, that's almost two hundred and that assumes Manchester is the only magical orphanage. Is it?"

"I don't know and the report doesn't say," Cissy said. "I think it's rather obvious my prior families would have little or nothing to do with such a place. These children either have no family left and no estate of note otherwise they would have been taken in by someone. They seem to have been abandoned by their families or – it looks like – were Muggle Borns. To the Pureblood Elites, the lot of them would be viewed as no better than Muggle Borns since they have no real connection to a 'proper' family."

"It doesn't say that in the report," Harry said.

"The report was written by Charenwell Intelligence," Cissy replied. "What I've seen from them seems to be factually accurate, but you have to admit that the Pureblood biases in Britain are very foreign concepts here. The numbers support my opinions."

Harry looked at the numbers.

NEWT Yr-Birth Dates-age-

1998.....9/1/79 – 8/31/80.....16.....28

1999.....9/1/80 – 8/31/81.....15.....36

2000.....9/1/81 – 8/31/82.....14.....26

2001.....9/1/82 – 8/31/83.....13.....18

2002.....9/1/83 – 8/31/84.....12.....17

2003 .....9/1/84 – 8/31/85.....11.....18

2004 .....9/1/85 – 8/31/86.....10....7  
 2006 .....9/1/86 – 8/31/87.....9....9  
 2005 .....9/1/87 – 8/31/88..... 8....7  
 2006 .....9/1/88 – 8/31/89..... 7....6  
 2007 .....9/1/89 – 8/31/90..... 6....8  
 2008 .....9/1/90 – 8/31/91..... 5....7  
 2009 .....9/1/91 – 8/31/92..... 4....6  
 2010 .....9/1/92 – 8/31/93..... 3....9  
 2011 .....9/1/93 – 8/31/94..... 2....7  
 2012 .....9/1/94 – 8/31/95..... 1....6  
 2013 .....9/1/95 – 8/31/86.....1....7

"It looks like as time goes on there're more orphans," Harry said.

"I don't think that's what's happening," Cissy commented. "It looks like three different kinds of groups here."

"Oh?"

"The ten year olds and younger seems to be one constant group. They range from six to nine per year but without any other pattern. Essential, this group seems stable over that time averaging eight per year..."

"Eight? How do you figure?"

"I was good at maths when I was younger," Cissy shrugged. "We have a second group ranging in age from eleven to thirteen with twice the average of orphans."



"The war?" Harry asked.

"They're too young. The numbers for the fourteen to sixteen year olds are probably due to the war. They would have been alive during the worst of it."

"But the fourteen year olds had to have been born in the first two months of that year! The war ended at the end of October of '81."

"No, not really," Cissy said. "V-Voldemort was destroyed at that time but the violence continued for several more months. It was disorganized, not according to any plan, but it continued as the Death Eaters truly knew no better. It stopped when most of them were caught. You may have heard that my former... that he avoided prison by claiming he was under the Imperious Curse?"

Harry nodded.

"Well, even though many knew he probably was one of them, he never was truly caught in the act during what most consider the war. He and three others were caught torturing a family – probably for the sport of it – in March of '82. That's when he claimed he was under the Curse. Until he was caught, there was no reason to justify his actions."

"So the killings went on?"

"Til around June of '82 or so. It wasn't as bad as it had been before V-Voldemort was destroyed, unless you were a victim of course. But the violence did continue. The Ministry and Daily Prophet kept that quiet for some reason."

Harry nodded. After a pause he asked: "Why the jump in numbers from the ten year olds to the eleven year olds? Is that normal and if so why? Why are there any orphans at all since the war or are these all very recent orphans?"

"I can only guess, Harry. We should ask Minnie to look this over. If anyone here knows, she would. She's been dealing with magical

education, and by extension magical children since before I was born."

Harry agreed and called over to Minerva's office down the hall. Fortunately, she was in and a few minutes later she was sitting in Harry's office looking over the file. In the time between the call and her arrival, Cissy magically copied the file so that each of them would have a copy. Harry scribbled some notes for questions.

After several minutes, Minerva sighed. "I regret I had not thought of this," she said somewhat sadly.

Harry looked at her. It seemed to Harry she was apologizing and that was not why she was asked to join them. "I'm an orphan," he said. "I should have thought of it and asked about it and did not. You've been asked to reform this country's educational system so that we don't have to send our children abroad to learn what we should be able to teach them ourselves, not look under every rock in Britain for at risk people we should consider relocating. We've all done a lot in the last couple of months so it's no wonder we may have missed some things. Cissy thinks you may be able to educate me about magical orphans in Britain."

"You seem upset," Minerva observed.

"Of course I am," Harry said. "I'm upset I had not thought of this before, although I'm pleased there are people working the problem who did. But what's really gotten to me is what I think Hermione's reaction to this will be." He then explained what he thought Hermione would say and why and his objections to that.

Minerva actually chuckled. "Yes, it does sound like her aside from the eyelash batting and pouting, but she has friends here who would not think twice about doing that. And your view on this is also sound. I won't say we can't take some of these children in – or ones like them – but I agree with all that we have going on for the foreseeable future it would be unwise to do so. We will have enough difficulty giving our own children the attention they deserve and these children would be in more need of attention than our own. They have been deprived of affection and attention, not because the staff at the orphanage cannot

or will not try and provide it, but because there're far too many children and far too few adults. I'm having a daughter. She will be my primary responsibility so she will always have one adult she can count on. I also have an elf to assist. That's far more attention and supervision than these children are accustomed to but perhaps not enough, given my professional schedule, to allow them to adapt smoothly. And many of our sisters are and will be in the Air Force and one day will be off fighting in a war. While all children deserve more stability than that, these children need it even more as stability is what they have been lacking practically from the moment they arrived there."

"So you're saying giving you permission was a mistake?" Harry asked.

"It was not ideal, given what's in front of us. But I'd never say it was a mistake. If we placed life on hold because of what is happening in Britain, we are in effect conceding a form of defeat. As consuming as our lives are and will be for the foreseeable future and accepting the fact that we cannot be there for our children twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, one thing is certain: our children will always know they are loved and are wanted. These children have grown without any reason to know that."

"I can't see that," Harry said. "Granted, my Aunt and Uncle treated me like something you'd rather not step in, but deep down I always knew my parents had loved me wanted me even when my mind tried to tell me otherwise – and it did when I was younger. My parents were dead. I had no reason to believe I was unwanted by them at least."

"And therein lies the difference, Harry," Minerva said. "While some of these children may be orphans like you – and most of them who would be are fourteen or older – the rest are foundlings. They were abandoned by their parents and families. They were unwanted, otherwise they would not be there."

"I don't understand."

"This orphanage has about eighty children between newborns and ten years of age," Minerva said. "And as the Manchester Magical Orphanage is one of three in Britain..."

"THERE'RE MORE?" Harry yelled. "What kind of numbers are we talking about and how do you know this?"

"As Deputy Headmistress, one of my duties was to ensure that the Muggle Borns and their parents learned of our world and, more important, that the children assigned to Hogwarts attended. Every year, at least a few of the Muggle families could not deal with the idea of magic. The ones who could not, the ones who would try and harm their children for something they were born with, were told they had two choices: accept their children for who they were or turn their children over to the magical world permanently. Some chose neither and were inclined to do something to get rid of magic. In those cases, the child was removed from their homes and placed in the orphanage and the parents would be obliviated regarding all knowledge of our world and their missing child. I had little to do with that process. I merely informed MLE that a magical child was at risk and they handled the rest and they are very good at what they do. I don't know all about how they do it, but when a child disappears like that, the Muggle world as a whole forgets about them."

"Fidelius Charm?" Cissy suggested.

"Good point. It certainly would be easier than trying to chase down anyone and everyone who might know something."

"So they get sent to the orphanage?" Harry asked. "What about their younger siblings if there are any? Why aren't they sent to live with another family?"

"If the parents of a magical child do not want that child, the only option in that society is the orphanages," Minerva said. "Adult Muggle Borns are about the only ones who would generally consider bringing a child without any heritage into their families. Some Half-bloods might. Most Purebloods would not. Muggle Borns by definition have no magical heritage. The abandoned children of a magical parent also have no magical heritage. The only orphans likely to be adopted

are orphans whose parents died and who have no relations who will take them in. Absent war, there are maybe a handful every generation, if any."

"Then why not let them be adopted by Muggle Borns?"

"There is no good reason. Suffices to say, Magical Britain is not about to grant any kind of boon to Muggle Borns or those who might be inclined to promote magicals who have no heritage. There are those who believe to allow these children a chance at any inheritance – even from Muggle Born parents – would undermine Purebloods and their position in society."

"That doesn't seem right."

"I won't say that it is."

"And what if the eleven year old sent to the orphanage has younger siblings?"

"First of all, the child is also obliterated to prevent any attempt at communication with their family. Remember, the parents were also obliterated. The younger children are left with them and obliterated as well. If they are magical, then the process repeats itself when the child is invited to attend magical school. Sometimes, the parents are more accepting the second time around even if they are unaware that there was a first time."

"That explains the jump in the numbers at age eleven," Harry observed. "But where did the younger ones come from?"

"In most if not every case, they were probably born out of wedlock," Minerva said.

"That explains it," Cissy added.

"I don't understand," Harry complained.

"The younger children had a magical parent," Minerva said. "Most had two. That means they are part of the magical heritage and even

the Pureblood bigots are reluctant to mess with that. We are too few in numbers to throw away any part of the next generation of magic users..."

"But the Muggle Borns?"

"Are an inexplicable exception to that thinking," Cissy said. "Since they did not come from magic, they don't count as being magical. Pureblood Elitists have all sorts of pet theories to explain how someone with no magical heritage came to be magical, some of which would essentially conceded that all humans are really undeveloped magicals, except the Elites would never admit that. Muggle Borns are viewed by the elites as diseased, thieves, liars, or the product of dark magic or unnatural copulations or anything else short of the possibility that magic is not confined to those with a magical heritage, hence the reason the Death Eaters expended so much effort trying to kill them and their families."

"And yet, you will find not a single scholarly work that supports their prejudice," Minerva said. "Quite the opposite, really. Muggle Borns are, on average, more magical than most Purebloods and there's never been a case of a Muggle Born having a Squib for a child. With rare exceptions – all of which can be traced to a particular illness the mother suffered from while pregnant, an illness that does not affect Muggle Borns – Squibs are uniquely a Pureblood problem. The problem is these works are banned in Britain. They are deemed heretical and subversive."

"Okay, but why does being born out of wedlock matter?" Harry asked.

"It's not simply being born out of wedlock," Cissy said. "There is a stigma for a witch to have a child when she's not married. But if the father then marries her, it's not a problem. However, it is not uncommon for one reason or another that the father will not marry the mother. If she has no inheritance of her own, it is unlikely she'll ever find a magical husband."

"Far more likely if she's under twenty-five her magical guardian will sell her off as a concubine," Minerva said. "Every so often a girl at Hogwarts gets into that kind of trouble and far too often they're never

seen again. Since their names are not recorded as deceased in the Ministry Archives, it's a fair assumption that when the father disavowed the child, the child was placed in an orphanage and the mother became a concubine."

"But I thought magical birth control's been around for a couple hundred years at least," Harry said. "How's it possible that a witch can become pregnant that way?"

"There'll always be the occasional young woman who may try to trap her man into marriage with a child," Minerva said. "It seldom works. Almost always the result is another orphan and another concubine. But you are correct. Magical contraception has been around for a long while, but it's not perfect. Every witch learns of it their first year. There are two methods. The first is a potion which, if brewed properly and taken once a month is fool proof. But if you take a poorly brewed potion ... this is usually the case if the witch makes it herself as there are stringent controls on the potions makers to ensure there are no bad batches. Also, there are witches who are allergic and cannot use the potion. There's then the charm, but it's not taught before NEWTs because it's very difficult to get right and you don't want to get it wrong. Even then, it only works for a few hours and how long depends upon the ability and magical power of the caster which can only be the witch herself. Given the degree of promiscuity at school, it's really a wonder the problem isn't much worse than it is. After all, there are very few Seventh Year virgins at Hogwarts and those who are, probably are not."

"That doesn't make sense."

"If you define virgin as never having sex with another person, it makes sense," Minerva said. "A girl who has had girl sex has had sex with another person, just not with a boy. And there are a handful of boys who ... well, you get the picture."

Harry grimaced. "Actually, I'm trying not to. Okay, so these 'orphans' are mostly children whose parents abandoned them for one reason or another."

"That's correct," Minerva said.

"Much as I hated living with them, not even the Dursleys stooped that low," Harry grumbled. "And because they were not good enough for their own families, no one considers them good enough."

"That might be overbroad, but it is the prevailing attitude and situation."

"And they're three of these orphanages..."

"Manchester, London and Edinburgh," Minerva said.

"That's what? Six hundred or so?"

"Less. Manchester is the largest by a significant degree. It's probably not much more than five hundred."

"Okay. Still, why have I never met someone from one of these orphanages? I never met one at Hogwarts."

"They don't attend Hogwarts," Minerva said. "They are sent to the other schools. And before you ask why, it's because the Headmaster amended the Charter when he took over to prohibit the admission of orphanage children. He says he's had bad experiences with them and as Head of the Wizengamot he was able to ban them from Hogwarts by law. I don't agree with that policy. It flies in the face of everything the school stands for. Fortunately, no one can touch the Muggle Borns that way without destroying the magic in the school. Don't ask me how that works 'cause I'm not sure myself. But were the Muggle Borns to be banned, the Founders' Magic would fail as they founded the school specifically to teach Muggle Borns..."

"But Slytherin hated..."

"That is the common belief and it's wrong," Cissy said. "No Pureblood Elite will admit that it's wrong for that's heresy. Slytherin was probably a Muggle Born himself as there's no history of his name before him. The dispute between Slytherin and the others that caused him to leave was about what to teach, not who to teach."



Minerva nodded in agreement. "The source material is in your library. Edwin Potter, who lived from 929 to 1014 was the second son of Harold Potter, Second Earl of Darby, Eight Lord of the Isle and Sixteenth Lord Potter. As Edwin was the second son, he became a Professor at Hogwarts about thirty years after it was founded and knew the Founders and what happened. His older brother was killed in battle fighting the Vikings in 982 and he became the Earl of Darby and so forth upon the death of his father in 988. In all probability, his chronicles are the only written, first-hand account of the early years of Hogwarts. And it's entirely probable that the only reason his account survives is because he became the Earl and such."

"Still," Harry said, "we've brought sixty-seven girls here from those other schools and not one of them is from an orphanage, unless I misread the reports. Surely one or two should have been given the nature of things. The report says here that the orphanage is believed to be a major supplier of Concubines."

"It also says they do not sell them at Auction," Minerva added. "Intelligence has reason to believe they sell to private brokers overseas. If that's the case, it's unlikely any of the orphans would have been caught up in our nets, for lack of a better word."

"Okay, how does that make sense?" Harry asked. "The magical children, even the true Muggle Born ones, are in the orphanage 'cause even Elites have an issue with messing with magical heritage, yet they then turn around and sell off the girls?"

"Since when has Magical Britain made sense?" Cissy replied. "Particularly when it comes to witches? We're every bit as magical, yet you'd never know it by how we're treated by our society." Cissy laughed. "I've been here too long! You've corrupted me! My parents must be spinning in their graves! I hope their heads fall off. But the point is, there are more of us than there are wizards yet we are treated as property more often than not. The only way I'd have a position as Executive Assistant to the Head of State back there is if I had something on you or I was sleeping with you..."

"But you are sleeping with me," Harry snarked.

"I had the job before I spread my legs for you and I spread my legs for you because I wanted to and so I could bond with you and your Coven, not to get the job," Cissy chided knowing he was teasing her a little. "And I sleep with you because I'm bonded with you and like to, not to keep my job. And your almost daily work breaks with me and whoever else chooses to join us are fun and the more I have mind blowing sex with you, the sooner I'll be pregnant."

"So I'm to be cut off when you're pregnant?"

"Don't count on it, Mister!"

"Levity aside," Minerva said, "not that I'm opposed to work breaks myself, far from it, I think we can agree that Magical Britain is an asylum run by its inmates. The issue at hand are the orphans..."

"What would happen if we did nothing?" Harry asked.

"You're not thinking about..." Cissy began.

"No, just asking. What is the level of risk to them?"

"Magical Britain as a whole strives to protect magical heritage and those from it. One would think that the Orphanages are safer than the schools as Muggle Borns are not deemed to be a part of the magical heritage. As I recall, the opposite was true during the war."

Minerva nodded. "There were several Death Eater attacks on the Orphanages. They stopped well short of putting the places out of business, but killing orphans was one of their sports. In my opinion, they stopped short of extermination so that there would be a supply of targets. The orphans were gathered into three locations. It was a lot easier to find them than to hunt down Muggle Borns and such scattered all over Britain."

"In other words, if we do nothing sooner or later the Death Eaters will come calling and children will die," Harry observed. "Obviously, Her Majesty would not be amused and I for one cannot allow that to happen if it's possible to prevent it. They'll have to be brought out."

"You should know that the Orphanages are a government entity. It's part of the Ministry of Magic," Minerva said.

"I didn't think it would be as easy as killing Umbridge," Harry said. "Cissy, contact Intelligence and let them know there two more of these places out there at least. Let's see what they can come up with in terms of information. Also, I want Dora working this. She came up with the last plan with help from Shack and Mad-eye and maybe they can come up with another brilliant plan to poke the Magical Brits in the eye.

"The next question is what to do with them when we bring them here. Since you're familiar with this, Minerva, I'd like you to take lead on it from this office. I don't want to have to build orphanages here if at all possible. I'd prefer that these orphans be placed with families or some such – excluding this one if at all possible. But whatever else happens, I think we need to bring them out sooner rather than later."

MONDAY, AUGUST 19th, 1996 – Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Minerva and Cissy had been right. Hermione had not batted her eyes or pouted. But Harry had been correct as well. He dined with her, her parents and Luna in the Private Dining Room in his Private Apartments. He deviated from his usual practice. Ordinarily, he would have dined with Hermione and Katie as Katie was to be spending the night with them but because of the orphan issue he switched the dinner arrangements around and Katie and her parents would be dining with him, Connie and the Plumbers his second time through the day. He avoided the topic during dinner. He preferred not to have such discussions during dinner if possible as it was bad enough that the topic of conversation at lunches and often breakfast were "business" related. He preferred at least one meal to be relaxed where he could momentarily ignore the pressures that were upon him and his family. But after dinner, he and the others gathered in the Great Room and he brought up the orphans.

Hermione had immediately latched on to the plight of the magical orphans in Britain and, as Harry expected, all but insisted that they should take at least some of the children in. Harry raised the same concerns he expressed earlier that day as well as the concerns

expressed by Minerva and Cissy, although for now he did not mention that he had already consulted with them. Hermione seemingly dismissed his concern as "minor problems" which she was confident they could "work through." Her passion and concern were admirable qualities, to be sure, but the longer they discussed the situation, the more Harry felt he was being the rational one while she was the one trying to charge in and save the world.

He told her something that Cissy had explained later. If they were to take in a child and in particular a boy, they had to adopt that child. Hermione had no issue with that. He then said that under Charenwell law and custom, just as in Britain, the heir to an estate was the first son, not the first born son. While in a multiple marriage he could favor the son of his Consort over an older born son of a Concubine, law and custom would see the adopted son as favored over any later born children. Magical adoption was frequently used to produce and heir. But both House Potter and House Black preferred blood heirs, not adopted ones. The only reason Harry was Lord Black was because he was a blood relation, a cousin of the last Lord and descended from another Lord Black. Every Lord Potter had been a son or grandson of the previous one. House Black had occasionally passed to a cousin of the previous Lord, but always a cousin descended from a common Lord Black ancestor. Harry had a duty to pass his titles to his children and not to an adopted child. Hermione countered that he could just cut the adopted child off from becoming the next Head of House. That was Harry's opening.

"Almost all of these children were abandoned by their families and the older ones know it. If we were to adopt and then cut him out of the line of succession, it would send a similar message wouldn't it? It would tell them they are not as important to us as our other children wouldn't it?"

"So we just adopt girls," Hermione countered.

"Which tells all the boys that are not chosen by us that they are unimportant to us – they are unwanted. In fact if we adopt any child, but not all of them, it sends a similar message. As important as an example may be, I will not send that message to those children. They need to know they are all wanted and that none of them are favored

over the others. And, as Head of Houses Potter and Black, I must preserve the line of succession if at all possible and as there are children, including sons on the way for both lines, that means even if I was inclined to set an example, which I am not, I cannot in good conscious do so until my children are born."

"That sounds like a bunch of Pureblood tosh!" Hermione shot back.

Before Harry could even form a reply, rescue came from unexpected sources.

"Hermione," Robert Granger said. "While your mother and I are still getting used to this – um – rather unique lifestyle, there are some things we can understand. First of all, you can't save the world no matter how much you might want to. Second of all, Harry seems to be correct that adopting any orphan into his family, while it may set an example for the others in this country, sends the wrong message to the orphans who are not adopted into this family. Finally, and no matter what you think, believe or how you choose to rationalize it, you have married into what is for all intents and purposes a Royal Family. You have also married into an exceptionally wealthy family. You've read more of this country's history than your mother and I have. How many Lord Potters embarrassed their family or squandered their familial estates? How many Lords of the Isles embarrassed their people? How many Earls of Darby proved a disgrace to their office? How many Dukes of Charenwell were fodder for the press and public ridicule?

"From what your mother and I have read, the answer is none. Harry is the seventieth generation of House Potter of which there is written record. He is the forty-ninth Lord Potter, the forty-first Lord of the Isle, the thirty-fifth Earl or Count of Darby and the twenty-seventh Duke of Charenwell in an unbroken, patriarchal line. Each of his predecessors left the family and estate no worse off than it was when they assumed control over it and most left it better than they found it. As head of what may well be the longest dynastic line in the world today, he has a duty to preserve the legacy of his family. Everything else should be of secondary consideration. As the hereditary sovereign, preservation of the line historically and presently is in the best interest of Charenwell.

"To adopt a child now could lead to a succession crisis decades in the future, something which has never happened here, but has been a cause for wars abroad. The Norman Invasion of England was the result of such a crisis as was the Hundred Years War with France when the French King died without an heir and the English Kings claimed the throne as distant cousins. The War of the Roses was a similar crisis. The ouster of James II caused another one as did the death without surviving issue of Queen Anne, although the latter did not result in bloodshed.

"Do you think it's best for all concerned to risk a succession crisis? Do you think Queen Elizabeth would sit idly by if Prince Andrew challenged Prince Charles for the throne? Do you think she would care which side of such a dispute Prince Phillip would take? And before you say that Harry should just step aside or perhaps Charenwell would be better off without a Duke, I want you to answer this question: Name one monarchy, constitutional like this one or not, that was pushed aside without bloodshed or civil war either forcing the issue or following it."

"I'm sure there must be one..." Hermione began. "The Tsar and Keiser abdicated."

"After millions were already dead in a pointless war," Rose said. "And Germany was a ruin, one which led to Hitler and a far bloodier war. Never mind Russia, which bled on the battlefields for another four years and more under the communists."

"I'm not aware of a single instance of one," Robert said. "There might be, but the fact I can't think of it suggests it's been so rare as to be almost miraculous. A change from one style of government to another has always been messy. Long ago, long before anywhere in Europe, Charenwell changed from what was probably a feudal state of a lord and vassals to a state run by its citizens for their benefit, but this was the desire of the Lord of the Isle and, more important, the Lord remained as Head of State.

"Harry is the Duke. His family is 2,000 years old. Where should his priorities be? If he has to make a choice between what you think is

best for him or you and what is best for a venerable House that could well outlive the both of you; if his must choose between what is best for his wife today and what is best for Charenwell going forward; which side should prevail? All other factors aside, you are married to Harry, but you are also married to the Duke of Charenwell and they are different. You can win an argument with Harry. All you can do with the Duke is express your opinion and counsel. You cannot tell the Duke what he must do."

"As the Countess," Luna said, "I agree that House Black should not consider adoption at this time. Maybe in a year or so after the new line of succession is born, but not before. As Luna, I can say that I see adoption by either House at this time will lead to dark times for both Houses and for Charenwell as well and the Duke must do what is in the best interest of Charenwell even if he'd rather not and his wife or wives wish it otherwise. I side with my Duke on this issue."

"FINE!" Hermione shot back after seeing that her mother also was not about to take her side. She remained silent for the rest of the evening and, to change the topic, Luna talked about the magical nature preserve.

A/N:

The Tsar abdicated in March 1917. Russia was still bleeding at the front fighting the Germans. The communists took over in October 1917 and sued for peace, but while they stopped fighting the Germans, they were fighting themselves and intermittently the U.S., France, Britain, Poland, the Ukraine and Japan until 1920. For Russia the fighting resulting from WWI lasted continuously from August 1914 until the final end of the fighting in their Civil War in 1923. Arguably more Russians died in the fighting and the resulting economic disruptions that followed the end of their war with Germany than had died during that war.

RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

1. Hermione Jane (Granger) Potter, age 16 (Gr-5); CONSORT.\*P - boy/girl (twins).
2. Minerva Grace (McGonagall) Potter-Black, age 68 (Gr).P - girl.
3. Astoria Lynn (Greengrass) Potter-Black, age 14 (Sl-3).\*
4. Ginevra Molly (Weasley) Potter-Black, age 14 (Gr-4).\*P
5. Stacey Marie (Campbell) Potter-Black, age 17 (SA-5).\*P
6. Laura Teresa (Oliver) Potter-Black, age 21 (PE-5).\*
7. Rhonda Kaye (Lester) Potter-Black, age 17 (SD-5).\*
8. Katie Alice (Bell) Potter-Black, age 17 (Gr-6).\*P
9. Padma (Patil) Potter-Black, age 16 (Ra-5).P
10. Sally-Anne (Perks) Potter-Black, age 16 (SG-5).
11. Erin Faye (Sullivan) Potter-Black, age 16 (SP-6).
12. Eleanor May (Bromstone) Potter-Black, age 13 (Hu-2).

HOUSE BLACK

1. Luna Celeste (Lovegood) Black, age 15 (Ra-4); CONSORT.\*P – boy/girl (twins).
2. Dora (Tonks) Black-Potter, age 22 (Hu).\*P – girl.
3. Mallory Michelle (Grant) Black-Potter, age 39 (Hu).P - boy.
4. Daphne Renee (Greengrass) Black-Potter, age 16 (Sl-5).\*P – boy.
5. Tabatha Simone (Collins) Black-Potter, age 16 (SA-5).\*
6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 22 (SD).\*
7. Karen Maria (Green) Black-Potter, age 18 (PE-5).\*P
8. Constance Maria (Plumber) Black-Potter, age 16 (SG-5).\*
9. Parvati (Patil) Black-Potter, age 16 (Gr-5).P
10. Kathryn Marie (O'Fallon) Black-Potter, age 16 (SP-5).
11. Laura Elaine (Madley) Black-Potter, age 13 (Ra-2).



12. Cathy Alicia (Abrams) Black-Potter, age 12 (Hu-1).

1. Narcissa (Cissy) Black, age 33 (SI-5); Coven Bonded.

2. Gabrielle Collette Delacour, age 9; Veela Bond.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

1. Fleur Patrice (Delacour) Weasley, age 19; CONSORT.P – girl.

2. Mary Ellen (Howard) Weasley, age 18 (Hu-5).\*P - boy.

3. Samantha Christine (Johnson) Weasley, age 17 (SG-5).\*P

4. Peggy Louise (Nolan) Weasley, age 17 (9/6/78) (Hu-6).\*P

5. Elizabeth Olive (Nolan) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).

6. Lana Catherine (Powell) Weasley, age 22 (SA).\*P – girl.

7. Carla (Masterson) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).\*P – boy.

8. Donna Lynn (Roselle) Weasley, age 19 (SG-5).\*P

9. Christine Celine (Paulson) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).\*P

10. Mandy (Brocklehurst) Weasley, age 16 (Ra-5).\*P

11. Wendy Seline (Hendricks) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).

12. Agnes Gabrielle (Martin) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).

13. Morgan Laura (Carlson) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).

14. Francine Sally (Broadmoor) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).

15. Wanda Helen (Parker) Weasley, age 13 (Gr-2).

16. Bonnie Faith (Carter) Weasley, age 13 (Hu-2).

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

1. Susan Marie (Bones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5); CONSORT.\*P – boy, girl (twins).

2. Amber Selma (Harker) Longbottom, age 33 (SI-5).\*P - boy, girl (twins).

3. Penelope Ann (Clearwater) Longbottom, age 20 (Ra).\*P – boy.

4. Annette Lucille (Harper) Longbottom, age 24 (SD).\*P

5. Deborah Leigh (McLean) Longbottom, age 20 (SA).\*P

6. Miriam Olivia (Riley) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).\*P – girl.

7. Amanda (Kennedy) Longbottom, age 16 (SP-5).\*P

8. Hannah Suzanne (Abbott) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).\*P

9. Patricia Faye (Abbott) Longbottom, age 14 (Hu-3).

10. Megan Allison (Jones) Longbottom, age 16 (Hu-5).

11. Leanne Lucille (Tinker) Longbottom, age 17 (Gr-6).P

12. Lavender Sue (Brown) Longbottom, age 16 (Gr-5).P

13. Natalie Mae (McDonald) Longbottom, age 14 (Gr-3).

14. Cho (Chang) Longbottom, age 17 (Ra-6).

15. Su (Li) Longbottom, age 16 (Ra-5).
16. Morag Coleen (McDougal) Longbottom, age 16 (Ra-5).
17. Tracy (Davis) Longbottom, age 16 (SI-5).
18. Teresa Chastain (Murdoch) Longbottom, age 14 (SI-3).
19. Natasha Brianna (Adair) Longbottom, age 13 (SI-2).

Fred Weasley, age 18.

1. Alicia May (Spinnet) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Verity Nicole (Smith) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).\*P – boy.
3. Danielle Louise (Carter) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P - girl.
4. Victoria (Vicki) (Peters) Weasley, age 17 (Ra-6).\*P
5. Rachel Francine (Peters) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).\*P
6. Coleen (Harrington) Weasley, age 23 (SP).\*P
7. Elisha Susan (Stout) Weasley, age 21 (SD)\*.P
8. Helen May (Ivey) Weasley, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
9. Caroline (Folsom) Weasley, age 18 (SD-5).\*P
10. Annette Maria (Barnes) Weasley, age 15 (Gr-4).P
11. Simone (Fanning) Weasley, age 15, (Hu-4).
12. Jessica (Jessie) (Bates) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Jennifer Lynn (Faulken) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Patsy (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
15. Mary Simone (Tennyson) Weasley, age 14 (Ra-3).
16. Megan Anne (Albright) Weasley, age 13 (Hu-2).

George Weasley, age 18.

1. Angelina Olivia (Johnson) Weasley, age 18 (Gr); CONSORT.\*P – boy.
2. Shelly Ann (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P - girl.
3. Ellen Suzanne (North) Weasley, age 20 (SG).\*P – girl.
4. Anna Melissa (Jenkins) Weasley, age 17 (Hu-6).\*P
5. Roberta Elaine (Larson) Weasley, age 25 (PE).\*P
6. Georgina Emma (Parker) Weasley, age 22 (SG).\*P – boy.
7. Eileen (O'Malley) Weasley, age 21 (SP-5)\*.P
8. Isabel (Tate) Weasley, age 19 (SA).\*P
9. Tammy (Grey) Weasley, age 15 (Hu-4).P
10. Pamela Ray (Adams) Weasley, age 15 (Ra-4).P
11. Selene Adams, age 13 (Ra-2).
12. Betsy (Watson) Weasley, age 14 (Gr-3).
13. Elaine Lucinda (Manning) Weasley, age 14 (Hu-3).
14. Michelle Eliza (Graham) Weasley, age 13 (Gr-2).

15. Alice Paulette (McGregor) Weasley, age 13 (Hu-2).
16. Morgan Laura (Carpenter) Weasley, age 13 (Ra-2).

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

1. Stephanie Mia (Rogers) Lupin, age 24 (SG); CONSORT.\*P
2. Sarah Michelle (Hanson) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P
3. Amelia Renee (Carpenter) Lupin, age 21 (SG).\*P – boy.
4. Tara Frances (Marks) Lupin, age 20 (SG-5).\*P
5. Christy (Matthews) Lupin, age 19 (SG).\*P
6. Ellie Beth (Mitchell) Lupin, age 18 (PE-5).\*
7. Olivia Patricia (Kennedy) Lupin, age 22 (SP).
8. Susan Anne (Parsons) Lupin, age 22 (Hu-5).
9. Donna Bethany (Simpson) Lupin, age 21 (SD-5).
10. Coleen Michelle (Greer) Lupin, age 20 (SP-5).
11. Alice Lynn (Ives) Lupin, age 20 (SA-5).
12. Greta Mae (Ives) Lupin, age 17 (SA-5).
13. Marie Catherine Anderson, age 19 (3/30/77) (Hu-5); Original Bond (8/18/93); Concubine Remus (8/19/96).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

1. Alice Maria (Pierson) Longbottom, age 40 (Ra); CONSORT.P
2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*P
3. Veronica Helen (Riordan) Longbottom, age 23 (SP).\*P – girl.
4. Gretchen Lee (St. James) Longbottom, age 21 (PE).\*P
5. Marie (White) Longbottom, age 19 (SD).\*P
6. Carol Matilda (Timmerman) Longbottom, age 17 (SD-5)\*.P
7. Simone Marie (Buchanan) Longbottom, age 27(SA-5).
8. Agnes Lucile (Thompson) Longbottom, age 26 (Hu-5).
9. Martha Helen (Graham) Longbottom, age 25 (SG-5).
10. Francine Katherine (Moore) Longbottom, age 24 (PE-6).
11. Tamara Yvonne (Faust) Longbottom, age 22 (SD-5).
12. Kristen Leanne Hall, age 21 (8/19/75) (SG-5); Original Bond (8/19/91); Concubine Frank (8/19/96).
13. Charlene Megan Hall, age 18 (11/5/77) (SG-5); Original Bond (7/28/94); Concubine Frank (8/19/96).

Charlie Weasley, age 23

1. Tatiana Maria (Ivanova) Weasley, age 19.
2. Christina Maria (Canterbury) Weasley, age 23 (SD-6).
3. Lisa Faith (Stuart) Weasley, age 23 (SA).

4. Janice Amelia (Brooks) Weasley, age 22 (SG-5).
5. Pamela Hope (Brooks) Weasley, age 18 (SG-5).
6. Tonya Louise (Childs) Weasley, age 21 (SD-5).
7. Lauren Noel (Ellis) Weasley, age 20 (PE-5).
8. Mary Louisa (Ellis) Weasley, age 17, (PE-5).
9. Renee Christine Richardson, age 18 (2/28/78) (Ra-5); Original Bond (7/30/94); Concubine Charlie (8/19/96).

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46.

1. Jennifer Susan (Albans) Weasley, age 27 (PE).
2. Deborah Ophelia (Rawlings) Weasley; age 26 (Gr-5).
3. Alice Margaret (Halverson) Weasley, age 24 (PE-5).
4. Emma Lucile (Dawson) Weasley, age 23 (SD).
5. Anna Justine Marsh, age 21 (SG-5).
6. Constance Maria Marsh, age 18 (SG-5).
7. Amanda Suzanne Tanner, age 19 (8/21/76) (SA-5); Original Bond (8/20/92); Concubine Arthur (8/19/96).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SEVENTY: NEW LIVES

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20th, Black House, Charenwell.

Although for Harry his disagreement with Hermione had been two days ago, he knew for her it had been the night before. She had spent the night in his bed with him and Katie, but she may as well have been in another room and she barely spoke to him the morning after. Her father had pulled him aside before the Grangers left to go home and asked him if this was their first "fight." Harry said it was not. Robert then asked was this the first time she had not gotten her way. It was, as far as Harry could recall, certainly on something she felt that strongly about. Usually one of them backed down.

"Arguably, she was about to cross a line," Robert said, "at least that's my impression."

Harry nodded. "You were right about the need to do right by my lineage and Charenwell. I wasn't as good at saying that."

"In the brief time Rose and I have known you, Harry, the one thing we can honestly say is you're not full of yourself and given all you've been through and all you are, that's a huge compliment and we find it very impressive. But there are and will be times, especially as Duke, where you must stand your ground even against Hermione and even if you hurt her feelings. A marriage where one person always wins or both people compromise all the time is not truly healthy in any family. Nobody is right all the time or wrong all the time and there are some things where compromise is the wrong thing to do. Rose and I think you made the right decision on this given all the circumstances. If you want my opinion, I think Hermione's more upset that none of us took her side than anything else."

"I suppose. That bit about Royalty might have been a shock as well. To be honest, even I haven't really thought of it that way."

Harry really did not know what it meant. When he sat down for his Duke work on his first trip through Tuesday and began going over more files, he asked Cissy to bring him any information about how House Potter became Dukes beyond simply saving King John's neck

in 1215. It was not until later in the afternoon that Cissy returned to his office.

"Well?" Harry asked.

"It's somewhat complicated and I'm sure I don't understand the details," Cissy replied. "The title 'Duke' was probably derived from a roman title for a military commander of some sort that continued throughout the former empire and even beyond after the empire was overrun by various Germanic tribes. In time it became the title for a high ranking noblemen or the lowest ranking sovereign. Kings are the highest rulers."

"What about emperors?"

"That wasn't a noble position in the western European feudal system. On and off again, there was a Holy Roman Emperor, but that title was bestowed by the Church and was more or less just a title. In that system, it was still just a King. Later, when some European countries expanded with overseas colonies or just because the King felt he deserved it, they became self-proclaimed 'emperors' but again, this did not change what they were in the system. They were no more sovereign over their lands than any King or other independent sovereign.

"Now depending on the source, the next highest independent sovereign is either an independent Prince or a Grand Duke and finally a Duke. All of those can or could be rulers. A few hundred years ago there were independent Dukes, Grand Dukes, Princes as well as Kings ruling countries of various sizes throughout Europe and no, there was no rule as to how large a country must be to have one title or another as ruler. Today, there are far fewer monarchies of any description. Most of the lesser ones, those that were not ruled by Kings or Queens, were gobbled in the wars of the nineteenth century and many of the monarchies destroyed in the wars of this century. Today, the Kingdoms – those countries ruled by a king or queen – are: Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain, but these are all constitutional monarchies. There is also the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg ruled by a Grand Duke and the Principality of Monaco ruled by an independent Prince. All of

these are hereditary, so there's historical precedent for your position in the Muggle World.

"Now, there seems to be no set rule for how a Duchy becomes independent from a kingdom, although there seems to be some prior association of some kind. Basically, each Duchy has a different origin. The crucial thing back when Europe was ruled by noblemen was that a small, independent state could usually only really come into existence and remain that way so long as it had a larger, powerful but of course there were exceptions.

"Okay. We know Charenwell was once vassal to England as the Earl of Darby was vassal to the King but that the treaty of 1217 changed that. Charenwell became an independent Duchy allied to the Crown. As it grew from the English nobility, and the then Earl was a part of that nobility, we need to know a little about that as well. And as you are aware, the Duke wore two hats as he had before. He was sovereign over his lands here and a vassal of the King over his lands in England.

"In England the lowest ranking nobility – at least today – are the barons, followed by the viscounts, the marquises, the earls and finally the dukes and the dukes are divided into two groups: the non-royal dukes, which are hereditary titles passed through a family and the royal dukes which include the Princes of the Realm and the Queen."

"The Queen's a duke and not a duchess?" Harry asked.

"The reigning monarch is Duke of Lancaster and Duke of Normandy regardless of their gender, or at least that's the case today. The royal duke titles are not hereditary. To be a royal duke you need only be the son or grandson of a king or queen. Aside from her husband and sons, the only other royal duke is Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who is the grandson of King George V and the Queen's First Cousin. He has a son and when he dies, his son, while still part of the nobility, will not be a duke.

"The non-royal dukes are from the nobility, but are not Princes of Realm. I have not found a single instance where a commoner was made a Duke. Noblemen were promoted to Earl or Duke or demoted

to that status if their fathers were higher. It's all rather confusing. A commoner elevated to the peerage was a Knight first and then elevated to a lesser nobleman such as a Baron or Viscount. According to the Muggle records, the oldest ducal line is that of the Duke of Norfolk which was established by Richard III for Lord Howard who supported his becoming King in the place of Edward V. However one thing is fairly consistent: most every hereditary duke I've checked can trace their line back to a former King of England, even if it's through a maternal branch. The earliest king with a descended non-royal ducal line is Edward I."

"How could my ancestor become a duke then? He became duke during the regency of Henry III right? That was before Edward I, right? I know he was an Earl, a title the family held since well before William the Conqueror and one which William continued. But as far as I know, he was no relation to any king, was he?"

Cissy gave him a non-committal shrug. "Justin the First became Duke of Charenwell by Letters Patent signed by the Regent John Marshall on behalf of the young Henry III in 1217. Henry would later ratify this elevation as Peer of the Realm. As you may recall, the title was conferred because of what both Justin and his father had done to keep King John on the throne and avoid a bloody succession crisis although Justin's father Edmund died in 1216 before Charenwell became a Duchy. Now, to whom does the Duke of Charenwell, as Duke and magical advisor to the Sovereign of England owe fealty?"

"The King or Queen," Harry said.

"What was the specific oath?"

"My House swore fealty and alliance to the properly recognized King or Queen who can trace their ancestors back to William of Normandy and his wife Matilda – that's William the Conqueror."

"But the oath was made to Henry III," Cissy said. "Why would they choose William I? William was succeeded by two of his sons: William II and Henry I and then Stephen I who was the son of William's daughter Adela. Henry II was the grandson of Henry I by that king's daughter. Then you have Henry II's two sons, or at least the two who



lived long enough: Richard I followed by his younger brother John. Henry III was John's son. But, while Henry III is a direct descendent of William I, he's not the direct male descendant and after his time it can be argued that there were other kings who weren't even the closest male descendent such as Henry IV, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VII and George I. Aside from George I, this was before they allowed a woman to rule. So again, why was the oath to William? How could they have known that every monarch since William would be his descendant? Were they even thinking it?

"Now remember, Harry, House Potter was already part of the nobility. The Heads were Earls before William and remained Earls after. After the Normans came, there were a lot of his followers who became Dukes and such. I think the reason your ancestors were not so elevated at the time despite practically handing England over to William on a silver platter was because your ancestors were not Normans. In the eyes of the Normans they would have been Anglo-Saxons, even though we know even that was not accurate. That Harstig Potter retained his title and lands was an exception and not the rule when the Normans came. And by the time of Edmund and Justin, England was still ruled by Normans. Much of the King's land holdings, if not a clear majority, lay across the Channel in the West of France. In fact the English King ruled more of what is now France than did the French King around that time.

"So, Justin was already part of the nobility, but he would not have been considered Norman unless it was shown he or his ancestors had married into the Norman nobility..."

"And my family had?" Harry asked.

Cissy nodded. "This part is not in the Muggle records for what you will see as obvious reasons. Justin's Great-Grandfather William, Seventh Earl of Darby took as Consort and Wife a witch named Agnes. Her mother was a Muggle Born Witch named Adeliza who began Hogwarts in 1068 and finished in 1075 about five months before her eldest child Agnes was born. Adeliza's parents were Normans. She had actually been born in Normandy in 1057 along with a non-identical twin sister named Cecilia who was not a witch – that can

happen, by the way. Adeliza's parents were named William and Matilda..."

"William the Conqueror?"

"The same," Cissy said.

"But how...?"

"Of William and Matilda's nine children who survived infancy, in Muggle Records aside from her name very, very little is known about Adeliza. They don't know when she was born or when she died. All they really have is her name. The more complete biographies from the time tend to agree that when she was young – around eleven years old – she either died or was sent into a convent."

"In other words," Harry said, "she disappeared from their world altogether right around the time a young witch would be sent to Hogwarts."

"Exactly. It was Justin's descent from William I that justified his elevation to Duke, even if most of the Muggle world was and would remain ignorant of that lineage."

"And being descended from that King of England was why we swore fealty to his descendants who sat upon the throne of England and not to the King who made Justin a Duke?"

"Exactly."

"So in theory, I could be in line for the throne?"

"Probably not," Cissy said, "so it's not worth worrying about. First of all, the official line of succession only dates back to King George I. There are almost 2,000 in that line. If you include Catholics – and they currently cannot become King or Queen – the line has almost 5,000. That list does not include any surviving Stuarts, Tudors, Yorks, Lancasters, Plantagenets or those of the House of Normandy which is the one you with your connection to the throne. Secondly, it does not include the descendants of any bastards and there could be

thousands of those. Although William himself was a bastard – his father Duke of Normandy and mother were not married when he was born – bastards were not in the line of succession even if their fathers treated them as his children and William IV and the Stuart Kings were very good to their illegitimate children. You're added problem is that six of the Dukes before you had a Concubine as his mother which while perfectly acceptable here would be considered a bastard by those who deal with the line of succession there. Finally, they probably have no record of your lineage due to the fact it is a magical record and would not have been available to them."

"So what's the point then?"

"You asked how it was England could make your ancestor a Duke and how it was that Charenwell could be an independent Duchy. The answer is they could make Justin a Duke because he was already part of the Nobility and Norman to an extent as a descendant of Adeliza, the magical daughter of William and Charenwell was granted its independence because that was within the authority of the King even if it was seldom if ever exercised."

Harry thought for a moment. "Kind of ironic, don't you think?"

"Oh?" Cissy asked.

"William, Duke of Normandy invaded and conquered England in 1066 and since then non-magical England has not been taken by any foreign power. The Queen is his descendant and has effectively asked Charenwell to invade and conquer – I guess – the magical side which also has not happened since 1066 and it will be an invasion led – for lack of a better word – by another of William's descendants. I guess one could say that only William of Normandy could conquer, control and keep England, even if the magical side had to wait over 900 years."

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20th, Potter Manor, Charenwell.

For Harry, dinner had meant that his Tuesday was only a third of the way along. His Duke Day had been spent reading the reports that had piled upon his desk. He still had his advanced ground school, a

training flight in a Spitfire, the ceremony for Colonel Granger, and his scheduled meeting with his Aunt and Uncle to deal with before this day was truly at an end. For Hermione, tomorrow would be Wednesday. She was quiet during the early dinner with Harry and the Patils (as Padma and Parvati were scheduled to join Hermione and Luna in one of Harry's beds that night) and during the party for the Coven and Fiona's family that followed for it was Fiona's twenty-third Birthday (she would get a Range Rover and a cat among other presents). It was only afterwards that she said anything more substantial than polite pleasantries or comments about flight training directed towards their guests.

"Harry?" she began. "I'm sorry."

"Um, thanks? That's okay."

"I had a long talk with my parents before I came to dinner."

"About what?"

"Last night. What was said and all of that."

"Oh. It's okay."

"Harry, please! I never really saw this as some sort of Royalty thing or any of that and just thought things would be the same..."

"The same?"

"In the past, if I felt strongly enough about something and did not back down, you ... well, you you'd listen. You might ignore me in the end, but you wouldn't have..."

"I still listen, Hermione. And I can't recall a time I ignored you or dismissed what you had to say. If I did something different, it was because ... well, because I did and most of the time I was wrong about it and knew it and did it anyway because I was being stubborn or foolishly noble or because I was fool enough to listen to Ron and not because I thought you were wrong."

"And last night?"

"I had spent hours talking with Minerva, Cissy and others about the issue. If things were different, I would have had no issue with your idea about them. But of course my life can't be simple no matter how much I want it to be and I had to decide what was best for all concerned and do it quickly because I knew or was pretty sure what you would think. If we could adopt one of them now without causing more problems than we solve, I would have done it if you or the others wanted to. But I did see problems with the idea even before I spoke to anyone and almost everyone saw even more problems. That's all we need is more problems and we'll probably have them anyway, but I'd rather not invite them in."

Hermione nodded. "My parents said something similar. I was so sure I was right and all and they told me that what is right for all is not always so obvious. They then said I had to accept that you are more than one person in my life. You are my best friend, you are my Husband and the love of my life, but you are also the Duke of Charenwell. When you decide something as the Duke, I should accept it. As the Duke, I and the others are advisors only. Close advisors to be sure, but only advisors. Most everything about our personal lives has nothing to do with you being Duke and everything to do with you being our friend and Husband and I failed to realize that sometimes you have to be the Duke and being the Duke is not personal. I overreacted and I'm sorry."

"Hermione, we're all still trying to sort all of this out and probably will still be trying years from now. You know that most of this should not have landed on me, you or any of the others until we all were grandparents in all probability..."

"You still would probably have had to object to the adoptions."

"That would have been under the Heir Apparent hat to preserve the line of succession and, more important, as Heir Apparent I'd probably have had to run this by the Duke anyway and he would have saved me the trouble of taking the blame for shooting down your idea. We could then have blamed it on the old man even if deep down I agreed with him."

"We all have to get used to this, don't we?" Hermione said.

Harry nodded. "Especially now that I know I really am of royal blood."

"Don't tell me you've learned King Arthur is an ancestor of yours," Hermione began.

Harry shrugged. "Don't think so. He only had one child we know of and ... talk about your purebloods. He was seduced by his witch sister to produce his son who so far as I know had no children. But I did learn something; an interesting bit of historical trivia that is really only useful at parties or such." And then Harry began explaining about how he could count William the Conqueror among his ancestors.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20th, Weasley Industrial, Potions Division, Jamestown, Charenwell.

In Hestia's opinion, the words "efficiency" and "Magical Britain" were mutually exclusive terms especially when it came to anything connected even remotely with the government. She had not even been in Charenwell a day to realize that this place was very different. It wasn't just the fact that this country was mostly magical or that despite the fact that almost everyone over eleven was carrying a wand and could use them publically, but also that this magical place had embraced non-magical technology to such an extent that one almost had to look for magic. But the real shock was just how efficient the government seemed to be.

She was staying at the South Strand Hotel, a place which made any of the inns in Magical Britain seem at best backwards and run down. She spent the morning with a younger woman who was "temporarily" working with the Department of Housing looking at flats in Jamestown and had already signed for a flat she could move into that week as all her things were in a trunk that she had shrunk down and lightened to fit in her travel bag. It was one of the smallest flats available, designed for singles or married couples without children or with only one or two. It had two bedrooms on either side of a large living area each with direct access to a large closet and bathroom. A very

modern kitchen opened onto the living area as well. It also had its own laundry room and a large fireplace that could double as a floor access. She had her choice of non-magical or magically enhanced appliances for the laundry and kitchen but what sold her was the view from each of the bedrooms and living area, all of which opened onto a balcony that looked out over the beach and the ocean beyond. The fact that her building was on the main thoroughfare along the coast that was lined with shops, offices and eateries, or would be when they opened, was another selling point.

After a lunch back at her hotel, she took a hack (cab, taxi) to a large, industrial looking building a few miles away and inland from the coast. There was a sign at the entrance that led to a large and mostly empty car park that read (WIPD). She would learn that those who worked there referred to the plant as "whipped" as a result of the sign. Her trip was as a result of a five minute discussion the day before with another young person temporarily working for something called "Job Placement Services" from the Department of Economic Affairs. Less than a day after setting foot in this new land, she was about to have her first job interview. She entered the building and found herself in a nice reception area and also learned from the receptionist that she was already expected.

"It won't be long," the receptionist said. "One of the bosses'll be here in a few. Have a seat. Would you like a cup of tea while you wait?"

"Unless she's really thirsty, Megan, let's not bother," a male voice said. Hestia recognized the red haired young man. She knew he was one of the missing Weasley's but did not know which one. She also knew he had to be a fair bit younger than she was. "Fred Weasley," he said, "Co-creator and proprietor of Weasley Potions, a Division of Weasley Industrial or whatever name we're calling it this week. And unless my lovely wife here was mistaken, you're Hestia Jones but I know she's not because we've met. Order of the Phoenix, correct?"

"Formerly," Hestia said shaking his hand, "and that's formerly of that Order."

"According to your file which I got this morning, it says you're a Potions maker for Fillian's in Diagon Alley. Never used the potions

myself although my – er – mother thought they were brilliant. Good place for ingredients though – well for Britain anyway. Been at it over ten years I see. How close are you to a Mastery?"

It was hard to get any word in edgewise until the question. "I could sit for it, I suppose," Hestia replied.

"Well, just so you know that it's not a job requirement here. But if you want the framed parchment for your wall, it's fine with us. Don't even have a NEWT in it myself..." Fred began.

"Fred! We all know the reason you don't have a NEWT is you bailed last spring!" Megan said. "They're parting with Hogwarts is the stuff of legend," she added for Hestia. "Not that you or George need a NEWT or a Mastery come to that. Alicia's told all of us you two were probably better at Potions than Snape could ever dream to be when you were Firsties!"

"True. The Greasy git was better than most but too set in his ways," Fred said. "That and he believes most of the rubbish in the theory side. What a load of dragon dung. Some of it is spot on, but a lot of it is just rubbish some Master came up with to justify his Mastery. They seem to add stuff that's either wrong or unnecessary to show their brilliance and nobody has the stones to correct them. Oh well."

"Um, pardon me if I sound rude, but you said this young lady is your wife?" Hestia said hoping to avoid an impromptu lecture. "Isn't she a little young? Aren't you?"

"I'll have you know I am of bonding age," Megan said sounding insulted, "and yesterday was our two week anniversary. I'm thirteen if you must know."

"My last lovely lass, but by no means the least," Fred said seeming proud. "Feisty too!"

"Last?"

"You should know that my brother George and I have sixteen wives each. Keeps us on our toes, it does. Now as for my other half –



meaning George of course – he's off scouting locations on the North Coast for our manufacturing plant."

"Sixteen wives?"

"Good thing we have so many too! Without them we'd have no work force at all right now."

"How can you have sixteen wives?"

"It's all perfectly legal, if you must know," Megan interjected.

Fred nodded. "Well, it's simple really. My Alicia is my Consort and the rest joined me as Concubines at first, but they've advanced their bonds to the point where magic and law consider them wives and our families have evolved into Covens."

Hestia gasped.

"First rule here in Charenwell is you should forget just about everything about magic you were told or taught back in Britain," Fred said. "It's mostly Pureblood rubbish. Purebloods hate Covens 'cause they can't control the bonds. In other words, to have a Coven you have to be willing to accept any willing and compatible witch and they have to accept that they are part of a greater whole and will not ever be in charge by themselves. And you can only achieve one with concubines and Consorts. None of this arranged marriage nonsense and, because of the Concubine aspect, that means invariably you must accept Muggle Borns as wives. Hence the reason the Purebloods back there consider it dark as it flies in the face of their so called sense of superiority. Now, I could explain it more but that would take all day. If your curious, there's a really good book on all of it. Megan?"

"I can have a self-updating sanitized copy here by the time you're done, Fred," Megan said.

"Sanitized?" Hestia asked.

"Each family has their unabridged version," Megan said. "We have a sanitized version that excludes certain of the less relevant and more personal and intimate details."

"Right," Fred said, "so if the Coven hasn't scared you away, let's take a walk and I can show you our facility."

"You're not going to require me to ...um ...," Hestia began.

"Join a Coven?" Fred asked. "It's not a job requirement at all. Besides, there no more openings. Shall we?"

Fred led her down a hallway, talking the whole time. "Right then, you're probably thinking this is a rather large place for making potions, a lot larger than your place in Diagon Alley, right? Well, we're not planning to make a little of this and a little of that. This is industrial scale. The Muggles have all sorts of factories that produce a lot of stuff quickly so George and I figured why not do that for magical stuff like potions? Got lucky there in a way as Harry – the Duke, you know – owns Muggle factories and one of them is relocating here. We were able to talk to some of their people about their planned set up and it gave us all sorts of ideas which led to this.

"Back in Britain, Potions Makers make their potions one caldron at a time and the largest caldrons are only about three gallons in total capacity at most and they ladle the finished product out one vial or bottle at a time. Our production runs can be fill barrels in one go, not vials – although we'll still bottle it. We're pretty certain we can increase the quality of the potions we make in bulk and reduce the cost per unit by about ninety percent and that's without taking into account that Charenwell is already a huge producer of raw ingredients which we can acquire without having to pay the massive import tariffs Britain and a fair few other countries charge. Even if we undercut our competition by fifty percent, we're talking huge profits! It's our intention to be the best and largest supplier of potions in Europe if not the world particularly for Healing, but we can do separate runs for household stuff and specialty potions."

They arrived at a large set of double doors before Hestia could think to ask a question. They entered a huge room that had several large

machines not all of which looked the same but all of which were massive in size.

"Still working through the bugs on some of these, but some are just fine," Fred said. "George designed them and we had some elves and goblins piece them together. Took about a week for them and we're now testing them and modifying them if they aren't where we want them in terms of results and such.

"This room is our Base Preparation Facility. There's no one who can supply our need for ready to use potions bases, so we do it here. We can make oils, extracts and over there we have distillers for alcohols and essences. We have top notch filtration for everything including both fresh and salt water. A lot of the stuff you get back in Britain is loaded with impurities that effects brewing. We strive to eliminate it. Anyway, when these machines are working properly, the process is real easy. You just load the raw materials in one end, turn the machine on and in time the processed base comes out the other end into a piping system that sends it to storage for later use. No worries and huge volume. The only limiting factor is the supply of raw materials. We're thinking that what we don't wind up using, we'll just sell on the market for those who want to make their own potions."

"How much do you make? How long does it take?" Hestia asked.

"Typical run is fifty gallons for now although these machines can handle ten time that and the time depends on the process but it's usually six hours or less for a run."

"Five hundred gallons in six hours?"

"Or less," Fred said, "and that's just from one line. When we're full up and running, we can run eight different lines for eight different bases. Best part is aside from quality assurance testing the entire work force doesn't need to know a thing about potions. The same's true for the rest of the plant."

He led her to another set of doors that led to another huge room. This one had far more machines, although they were all much smaller compared to the base preparation machines.

"This is our ingredient prep facility," Fred said. "We currently have eighty-two stations for preparation of all sorts of ingredients. We don't have a machine for each possible ingredient. That would be a little ridiculous. These machines are for the various preparation techniques, really, and we have at least two machines that can do the same thing: mincing, slicing, squeezing, grinding into chunks or fine powders – anything we need to do to have a ready to use ingredient. Again, simple to operate, doesn't require a lot of potions knowledge, raw materials in, finished product out into the piping that send it to a storage container. These machines can run non-stop. So long as there's an available container at the end for the finished product and the raw materials are fed into the front end, they'll just keep slicing and dicing all day long. Admittedly, they probably won't have to, but they can. Again, the only thing here that requires any expertise in potions would be quality control, although a background in Herbology might work as well."

He led her through another set of doors. She was now in an even larger room that seemed to be a forest of huge, cylindrical tanks that stretched from floor to the ceiling high over head.

"Storage and Batching," Fred said. "These bins," he added indicating the large cylinder tanks, "store our processed ingredients – up to five hundred gallons per bin. Our base tanks are at the other end of this room and they can hold up to 2000 gallons each. Right then," he added leading her to a large open area with rows of some kind of rail overhead. "This is Batching," he said. "We currently have fifty brewing stations in the plant and can, in theory, produce fifty different potions at one time using up to a hundred gallons of base per station. That's the next room. Here, workers will load the base and ingredients onto these overhead rails in special containers. They fill the containers from the storage bins and tanks and place them in order based upon what goes in at what time in the process. No measuring. The machines in the other room take care of that. Whatever is not used is returned to the bins. While the workers on the line need not know anything except where the ingredients are stored – and all the bins are labeled – we do need knowledgeable potion makers to produce the daily production lists for each line – basically the list of ingredients and order of delivery so that they know what to put first, second, third

and so forth on the line and what labels to put on the transport bins on the rails so the leftover ingredients are returned to the proper storage bin."

Fred led her through another set of doors into a smaller room. There were fifty huge kettles in a row along the side they entered from, each had all sorts of strange looking contraptions next to them, atop them and sticking out from them.

"And here is the heart of our little operation," Fred said. "Everything else leads here to Brewing. Each of these kettles brews a batch of potions, up to a two hundred and twenty gallons of capacity although, naturally, it would be less when everything is reduced down at the end of the process. Naturally, we won't run all fifty of these at once. After each run, the machines are shut down and opened up for inspection and cleaning and a few will probably be down for maintenance. Still, we figure we can run between twenty and thirty at a time. We have one set up for a test run if you're interested."

Hestia could only nod. Fred led her down the line of kettles until they reached one where another young woman was waiting.

"Ready Annette?" Fred asked. "This is another one of my lovelies Annette. Annette, this is Ms. Hestia Jones. She's a Potions Maker applying for a position here."

"Pleased to meet you," Annette said. "We're set for a test run for blood replenishing potion – an eighty gallon start volume." Annette turned to a control panel by the machine and began pressing controls of some sort and the station began making a loud humming noise.

"It's already pre-heated," Annette said speaking over the noise.

Hestia watched as a large container came overhead on a rail and stopped over the kettle.

"That's our base," Annette said. "It's dumping," she added pointing to a cylindrical glass attached to the kettle with markings from bottom to top. Hestia could see some kind of fluid in the glass and it was rising.

"This is our gage glass," Annette said. "It tells us the fluid level in the kettle. Right, we're topped off for this run." She threw a switch. "We're now going to heat it to the initial mixing temperature which we monitor with this thermometer gage here," she added pointing to a gage. "It'll take a few minutes. Once it reaches the set temperature, it'll stay there until I change it."

Hestia watched as the needle moved slowly. When it stopped, she heard a whine and looked and saw another container move over the top of the kettle.

"First ingredient," Annette said. "The amount to pour and rate is already set in the controls." Some moments later a green light appeared on the panel. "Ingredient's been added and," she pushed a button, "mixing." The kettle hummed at a different pitch.

"The first mix is for a certain period of time," Annette explained. "It's been pre-programmed and will stop on its own. As you know, some mixes are until the potion turns a certain color and we can watch that on this gage glass here," she said pointing to a second glass tube, "there's a pump that keeps a constant flow of the brewing potion through the glass."

Hestia watched as Annette continued the process, adjusting the temperature from the control panel, the mix, and the introduction of ingredients and watching the various glasses as needed, all the while consulting a sheet of paper. The process took about an hour and then Hestia noted that the potion in the glass had turned blood red. Annette pushed another button on the panel and a few minutes later there was a green light.

"Brewing complete," she said. "Setting cool down," she added pressing another series of buttons. "There're metal coils that will allow chilled water to flow around the inside of the kettle. It won't mix with the potion – unless there's a leak which there shouldn't be. This will cool the potion down until it's at room temperature then we can draw a test sample to see if it's right."

Hestia nodded. "What's that paper?"

"Operator instructions," Annette said. "Basically it's directions on how to do the run. All I need to know is the controls on the panel really. I follow these instructions. It tells me what to watch, what to adjust when to introduce ingredients, when and how I should set the mix and all that. Don't really need to know beans about making this stuff and, considering I only just finished my Fourth Year and this is a NEWT level potion... Not sure I could make it on my own."

A few minutes later there was another green light on the panel. Hestia watched as Annette took a small vial and placed it under a spigot, filling the vial with the red potion.

"You know how to test Blood Replenishing Potion for quality?" Fred asked.

This was obviously her test, Hestia thought. She took out her wand and did a few spells. "It's ... it's more than acceptable," she said genuinely surprised that this system of machines actually worked.

Fred nodded as if it was hardly a surprise. "Set it up for bottling," he said to Annette and then led Hestia through another set of doors into another part of the plant.

"As you can probably guess," he said, "another job for a Potions Maker is testing the final product to make sure it's what we think it is. Once it passes the test, the contents of the kettle can be pumped in here for bottling." He pointed to a green light and pushed a button on a far less complicated panel. Hestia watched as rows of bottles arrived on a track, stopped under some machine which lowered over each of the necks and filled several bottles with the red potion, repeating the process several times. A separate machine a little further down the line capped the bottles and once capped, the track moved them off somewhere else.

"In case you're wondering," Fred said, "when we're all up and running, we'll also have our own plant that will be making the bottles and such."

Hestia was amazed at how fast everything was happening. She saw Annette pass by and through another set of doors.

"We can see the next part of the plant," Fred said, "although all that happens there is the bottles are labeled and placed into boxes for shipping. Annette's going to place the packed boxes under a Stasis Charm. So, what do you think of our little operation?"

"It's ... well, it's hardly little, is it?"

Fred only shrugged. "This is just production. We also have warehousing, shipping and receiving for raw materials and finished product and a separate building which will be for research and development."

"Research?" Hestia asked for as interesting as this plant was, that sounded even more so.

"Yep. Most standard potions instructions are over done. They have too many unnecessary steps and often unnecessary ingredients that do nothing to change the quality or effects of the potions. It's those Potions Masters trying to make a name for themselves by fixing what doesn't need fixing. We're trying to pare down the processes to only that which is absolutely necessary which will probably result in both higher quality and lower unit cost. George and I also invent our own potions. We began doing it to support our joke and novelty products but while we will continue doing that, we're looking at practical applications as well. Given what I read in your General Application, you might actually be overqualified for production quality control. We will need people like you for overall production management, but we could also use your skills and experience over at R&D. It's up to you, really, where you wind up as you're the first applicant and I can see no reason not to hire you as a Master Potions Maker."

"You're not actually operating yet," Hestia observed.

Fred nodded. "As I said, we're still working the bugs out of some of our machines. We also don't have much of a work force yet. Just George and I and some of the Coven wives for now. It'll be a few months before we've hired and trained a full work force. But that test batch you saw is going to be shipped out and sold. We do that



already with ever successful test run. Now, I assume you want to talk about job duties and compensation?"

Hestia nodded and Fred led her back to the "front" of the facility and to an office. A couple of hours later, Hestia left. She was hired as a Master Potions Maker and, at least at first, she would split her time between R&D and training others in the various aspects of quality control. The salary was actually higher than what she had been making and she could start at any time, but was allowed up to two weeks to "get settled in."

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20th, The Dursley Flat, Pottersport, Charenwell.

Vernon Dursley had returned from the hospital following treatment for his near fatal heart attack a week ago. The Healers had him on a potions regimen to deal with the effects of the potions he had been fed over the years by wizards unknown back in Britain. His wife was on potions as well, but not nearly as many as Vernon as at least two of them were to address his weight issues. He was told to take a couple of weeks off from work and that he would probably need to replace most of his clothing. He had already dropped almost two stones (28 lbs) and it was expected that within a month he would drop a full hundred weight or more (140 lbs). This was without changing his diet and, in fact, aside from being told to eat healthier than before with less fatty foods, he was told to continue to eat well.

Both he and his wife had suffered adverse physical side effects from what was supposed to be merely mind and mood altering potions with a "powerful compulsion factor." In his case it was obesity and hypertension which they were now managing with these potions. In the case of his wife it had been sterility which was why they could not have children while they were on the potions and, they were told, there had been a real risk that the condition could have been permanent. That Petunia was pregnant with twins was more and exception than the rule. They should never have been given those potions. The side effects were because they were not magical as magic would have compensated for the effects.

"Whoever did this to you either wanted you to die or didn't care one way or another," one of the Healers had told them.

Both he and Petunia knew that it was the potions more than anything else that had caused them to treat Dudley and Harry the way they had. While Vernon had not been comfortable with magic in general and while Petunia had a falling out with her sister years and years ago, neither of those things explained what they became. Neither of them were by nature abusive people before those potions and they both felt horrified about what they had done. Petunia had already had an opportunity to speak with Harry. That was while Vernon was still in the Hospital. Vernon was currently too upset with himself and humiliated with what he had done to ask for a meeting. He had no idea how he was going to look the lad in the face much less how he was going to explain his sister who had no excuse at all. Then again, without the potions he never would have given Marge the time of day. He never liked her before and really had no cause to like her at all.

The rest had fortunately come at a time when he could afford some time off from work. The new Grunnings ammunition plant was nearing completion but aside from managers and some technicians who had and were arriving from Britain, it lacked a work force. That was Personnel's problem and Vernon's only input would be jumping on them to hire and hire, but he knew that you can't hire unless someone was looking for work and there had been no labor surplus in Charenwell. This "evacuation" had only just begun and it was from that group that Grunnings hoped to hire its work force. But even with the work force, until the chemical plant was up and running, all they could really do at Grunnings was turn out shell casings and bullets and such. They could not put it all together without primers, gunpowder and such so, for now, there was little for him to really do.

He sat on the couch in the living room of their flat reading a paper. Early on he was surprised to learn he could get The London Times and a few of the other "normal" dailies from Britain here in addition to the local paper. He was reading a commentary on whether the Conservatives had a prayer of keeping their majority in the House of Commons following the next general election which was still months away when the doorbell rang. For what was said to be the most magical country on Earth, Vernon was still surprised at how normal it seemed. He seriously doubted magicals in Britain had doorbells or light bulbs for that matter much less television. Here it seemed you

had to almost look for magic even if it was all around you. Well, except if you went to Jamestown and watched the construction, as he had done almost every day since arriving. That lot used magic at least for what Vernon thought of as the heavy lifting and such although he was told there was little difference between the finished product had it been built "normally." What was different was how fast it all went up and how few workers were needed to build.

Petunia had gone to get the door. Vernon heard some of what was said and it was all from his wife.

"Oh my! Well this is a surprise. ... And thank you, they're lovely. I'll need to put them in a vase. ... Yes, Vernon is here. He's in our lounge reading the paper. ... That's nice. Would you like to have a cup of tea? ... Right then. Come on in and have a seat and I'll get the tea going."

Someone soon sat across from Vernon, although he didn't look up as Petunia had not announced who the visitor was.

"Good morning, Uncle Vernon," the person said. This caused Vernon to look up. Before him sat someone who looked like the "freak," but this young man seemed taller and was certainly better dressed in his suit and tie and had an air of command and confidence that the "freak" never had.

"If you expect me to call you Your Greatness or some such," Vernon began.

"If this were a State occasion - and there are really few of those and fewer I'd need to invite you or Aunt Petunia to - it'd be Your Highness or, if I was willing for you to be informal, Milord. But this isn't a State occasion, so it's just Harry. Not 'Boy,' most certainly not 'Freak', just Harry."

"You're pretty dressed up to be just Harry," Vernon said. "And from what I've bothered to read in the papers here, a little too high and mighty to just pop 'round for some tea."

"As for the suit, my ladies insist on this sort of rig," Harry said. "Not that I'm a fan of it. But with the number of women I have to deal with, I suppose it's better to suck it up and wear the damned suit. As for being here? Aunt Pentunia's told me a bit and it's a bit that ... well, I had to put a visit in on my schedule didn't I?"

"Hen pecked," Vernon snorted.

Harry shrugged. "If that's what it takes. I've got far more on my plate than anyone my age need ever worry about. If listening or relying upon my ladies helps ease that load, it's a small price to pay. But I'm not here about me. I'm here about you and Aunt Petunia."

"Gonna give us money, are you?"

"According to my bankers, you've been all but helping yourself to my money for years," Harry said with a chill in his voice. "The question is what do I do about it? My bankers would call you a thief and hang you and feed you to their dragons."

"It was your lot that did it! It was the damned potions!" Vernon replied in a panic. "It was than damnable bastard Dumber - what's it!"

Harry smiled. "That's what I told my bankers. They, in turn, forced the Old Man to pay me back. It was more than six million quid, I'm told."

"Six million? We never..."

"He took far more than you ever received," Harry said.

"I hope he's locked up," Vernon began.

Harry shrugged. "He effective controlled the courts and the legislature back home and because it's the legislature that appoints the Minister for Magic, it means he can control all of the government. To lock him up, it would first be necessary to remove him from all of his offices and that's far easier said than done, at least if you want to work within that system."

"Meaning he's going to get away with what he did to us?"

"For now," Harry said. "He has lost most of his money, both what he accumulated legally and what he stole from myself and others. He is politically as powerless now as the rest of his government as I have managed to deadlock them and they will remain deadlocked unless they basically destroy themselves. If they do nothing, they're powerless. They can't raise taxes or pass laws or any of that and to regain that ability, they effectively have to turn over a majority of the government to the very people they've spent centuries trying to keep out of power. Dumbledore and the others would rather let the country rot than turn it over to what they consider the lower classes."

"So you're doing nothing about those bastards who ruined our lives?"

"Did I say I was doing nothing?" Harry asked. "Right now aside from breaking them financially and crippling their government and economy, there's little I can do. I've managed to kill a few of the bastards, but to really go after them? We're not there yet. Oddly, that's one of the reasons you're here, Uncle Vernon. I think a few of my friends arranged your relocation to stick it to you, but your plant... Grunnings Munitions would relocate here regardless. And you have noticed, haven't you, that you're going to be at least doubling the production from what had been the norm in the old plant, haven't you?"

"You're buying ammunition?" Vernon asked.

Harry nodded. "Indirectly through Her Majesty's government, at least on paper. Over half of your production for the foreseeable future will go into our stores for our armed forces."

"You know that Dudley's joined up, don't you?"

"He told me," Harry said.

"And you?"

"I'm in advanced training in our Air Force for now. Once I complete it, I'll cross over the base and start my Army training. By custom, the Duke or his Heir Apparent is expected to lead our troops into battle,

although that hasn't actually happened in about two hundred years. My Grandfather flew fighters in the RAF during World War II. He fought in the Battle of Britain, North Africa and Italy. My Great-grandfather was a colonel in the second regiment we sent to France in World War I. The first, led by his Uncle, was slaughtered at the Somme. His regiment saw a little action at the end just as the Germans were collapsing. Neither my grandfather nor my great-grandfather were Dukes at the time of their service. Her Majesty has asked for Charenwell's help with the current crisis and when we go, I'll be going as well."

"I would have figured your lot would've preferred fighting with that hocus pocus stuff, not with guns and such," Vernon said.

"Our enemy will use that hocus pocus stuff probably exclusively and to their detriment," Harry said. "Most witches and wizards can barely fight their way out of a paper bag and certainly are not trained to fight in a life threatening situation. It takes years to train a magical warrior. I'd be at least twenty by the time I finished that training. Now Voldemort has cut some corners on it, but as this summer has shown cutting corners basically is suicide. Dumbledore would prefer no one was trained to fight as they could be a threat to his regime. We figure they might be able to deploy 2,000 wands that we'd have to worry about.

"But here's the thing, Uncle Vernon. Wizards aren't bulletproof and it takes far less time to train anyone to fight with guns than to do so with a wand and they are trained to put their targets down. We currently have recruits for six battalions. That's 3,600 infantry soldiers and about 2,400 support troops, almost all of whom will be able to at least defend themselves properly. That doesn't include any of the new arrivals. We expect at least double those numbers in the end. A year and a half from now or so, Magical Britain is in for a rude surprise. Dumbledore, Voldemort and their ilk will face a force they cannot defeat and behind us, if needed, is the full might of Her Majesty's armed forces."

"Are you two talking shop?" Petunia asked walking in with a tea service.

"Sorry," Vernon said looking uncomfortable. In fact, Harry realized that his Uncle had been looking particularly uncomfortable the whole time.

"I'm sure there's a reason why Harry took time out of his busy schedule to visit," Petunia said. "I'd like to think it's not to talk about business."

"No, Aunt Petunia, it's not," Harry replied. "I'd like to think I might have managed to come around earlier than today, but as you noted I've been living on a rather tight schedule."

Vernon snorted. "With twenty some wives...", he began.

"Without going into detail, that's scheduled too fortunately."

"Oh?"

"It's twenty-five wives," Harry said. "The lot of them are ... well ... eager? I would've thought that becoming pregnant would make them less so. It seems logical to think that. Apparently, logic has nothing to do with that. When Hermione and Luna made up that schedule, I thought it was a bit off, really. Now, I thank them for it. They'd wear me out but for it and thanks to it I can say that it's not on the schedule for now."

"Twenty-five pregnant women?" Petunia asked.

"Um no," Harry said. "Twelve that we know of with at least two sets of twins involved - meaning children, not their mothers. Three others are - um - actively trying. Once their off and running that way I expect six more to begin trying. The rest are considered too young, although one of them will be old enough by year's end."

"With everything else, how do you find the time?" Vernon asked.

"Um, it has to do with that word," Harry began.

"Magic?" Vernon asked.

Harry nodded.

"It made me a little nervous at first when you came to us and before those bastards started feeding us those damnable potions. I'll concede that. But you're occasional bouts aside - and most of them were merely amusing - you were just a normal little boy. You and Dudley were thick as thieves and that was more infuriating - and amusing - than any magical nonsense. The two of you should've been closer than brothers, really. When we took you in, we swore we would not allow magic to come between you and your family as it seems to have done between Petunia and her sister. You should've known magic was real and you were a wizard for as long as you can remember and Dudley would have been raised knowing that and knowing it didn't make you better than him or anyone else. But then those bastards had to get involved. I understand I could do nothing really. But ... I'm ashamed for what happened even if I had lost my control to those bastards! I won't use those damned potions as an excuse. What I did was reprehensible. I can't believe I actually came to like that bitch of a sister!"

"Aunt Marge?" Harry asked.

"She was a fucking brute to me when I was little! She was ten years older than I was and hated my very existence. Course, it was only worse that she was a total loser. She's never married and I'm pretty certain it's not because she swings another way. No man would have her. Guess that's why she's into those damned dogs although if the RSPCA ever checked her kennels, she'd probably lose the lot of them."

"We couldn't stand her, Harry," Petunia said. "We didn't even invite her to our wedding. We did invite my sister although she sent her regrets and wasn't there. Then the potions and suddenly Marge was our best relation and all the others fell by the board."

"It seems that for the last fourteen years we've been living a lie," Vernon said as he seemed to cry. "What those potions made us do to you is unforgivable. There must be a God out there because you and Dudley have grown into fine young men no thanks to us. To think on what could have been is heartbreaking. I would've loved to teach you



and Dudley to play golf. I now remember thinking that once and thinking that while you two were best of mates, you both could be very competitive and I thought if you both took up a sport where you could compete against each other - and Dudders has always been physically bigger and would've been anyway - the two of you would drive each other to excel. Instead, we almost ruined the both of you."

"I do have a golf course," Harry replied. "Can't say when I'll have time to learn to play but I can offer you a membership, one which allows you to play there and gives you permissions to the Royal Course at South Farm. I'm told that the Prince of Wales and his brothers and Prince Philip love that course and play often when they are here. Apparently, it also includes a membership at someplace called St. Andrew's, although with this war thing, it might be a while before it's safe to take advantage of that."

Vernon gapped for a moment. "You didn't need to offer that...", he began.

"I told Aunt Petunia that it will take me a while to truly get over our past, Uncle Vernon. But I'm willing to try for the sake of our family and in the hope you can be what you were meant to be to me and all of that. I know you like that game and it's the least I can do."

Vernon nodded. "Thank you," he said. "And I ask only one thing from you in return..."

Harry expected a shoe to drop as it were.

"Petunia and I would like you to be the Godfather for our daughters."

It was unfortunate that Harry chose that moment to sip his tea as the sip ended up everywhere but where it was intended. "Daughters?" he asked when he could catch his breath.

"You didn't tell him?" Vernon asked of his wife.

"It was so soon and we had other things to start working through," she replied.

Vernon looked at Harry who still seemed confused. "We learned about this the day after I was sent to the hospital here. The potions we'd been given and all of that caused Petunia to miscarry. She was pregnant not long after you arrived and we lost that child and couldn't have one after - and we did try. We came here and missed our potions dose apparently and ... well it seems it was the potions that kept us from having another child and we did want another, or we did before the potions. So without that regular dosing..." Vernon shrugged.

"It's twins, Harry," Petunia said. "Two girls, although we don't know if they're identical or what. But we do know they're both going to be magical children. And thank God we're here! I've made friends with some women around here and I'll have plenty of advice about how to deal with their magic and such."

"We're naming the first one out Lily after Petunia's sister and your Mum," Vernon said. "The next one will be Daisy, as it's a flower just like her Mum and Aunt."

"I..." Harry began. "Congratulations and I'm honored to be asked to be their Godfather. I can't promise I can be their for their birth..."

"We know you're busy and will be," Petunia said.

Harry waved it off. "Their due date is probably at the beginning of my own baby mayhem. But if my wives give me a break, I'll be there, Aunt Petunia."

"Thank you, Harry," she replied sincerely.

"I came here for family," Harry said. He reached into his jacket and pulled forth several envelopes and handed them to his Aunt. She gave him a puzzled look. "I know in law and by magic I am already married several times over, but it's not real for the families until there's a proper wedding. Those are your invitations. I've sent Dudley invites as well, even though I know he won't be able to attend all of them due to his training. I've asked him to stand with me when he can. I'd like you to be there as well."

"There are three just this Saturday," Petunia said.

Harry shrugged. "I can be in more than one place at one time, but that's neither here nor there. For me, it's only two weddings as one will be a double. My Luna has no surviving family and my Hermione has insisted she be a part of my first wedding as a bride. She needs someone to escort her down the aisle. I want to rebuild our family and I think you, Uncle Vernon, should escort my orphan brides down the aisle when it's their turn."

"I'd be honored," Vernon began. "But gifts?"

"They're registered or so I'm told, but I don't expect gifts. What's not given by guests I'll buy so no worries there. If you feel the need, just focus on my orphan brides as they're only three of them."

"You'll stand with Dudley if he asks?" Petunia asked.

"I hope he does, Aunt Petunia. Clara's a really special girl and I'd be honored to be a part of their day when it comes."

"We'll be there," Petunia said.

#### A/N: RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's.(Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

In this abbreviated version changes are for birthdays, newly bonded or changes in bonds - as in newly Love Bonded.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

No change from last post.

HOUSE BLACK6. Fiona Michelle (Simpson) Black-Potter, age 23 (SD). \*Bill Weasley, age 25.

No change from last post.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

No change from last post.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

No change from last post.

George Weasley, age 18.

No change from last post.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.13. Marie Catherine (Anderson) Lupin, age 19 (Hu-5).14. Paulette Kristen Lee, age 19 (10/12/76) (PE); Original Bond (7/25/93); Concubine Remus (8/20/96).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.12. Kristen Leanne (Hal) Longbottom, age 21 (SG-5).13. Charlene Megan (Hall) Longbottom, age 18 (SG-5).14. Nora Elizabeth Jackson, age 20 (5/5/76) (SD-5); Original Bond (8/20/92); Concubine Frank (8/20/96).

Charlie Weasley, age 23.9. Renee Christine (Richardson) Weasley, age 18 (Ra-5).10. Samantha Anne Wood, age 17 (5/15/79) (PE-5); Original Bond (8/12/95); Concubine Charlie (8/20/96).

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).5. Anna Justine (Marsh) Weasley, age 21 (SG-5).6. Constance Maria (Marsh) Weasley, age

18 (SG-5).8. Sharon Ellen Davis, age 19 (1/1/77) (SP-5); Original Bond (8/3/93); Concubine Arthur (8/20/96).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SEVENTY-ONE: THE GOBLIN HOARD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21st 1996 - Little Hangleton, Yorkshire, U.K.

It wasn't the run down Riddle Manor, but it would do. No one expected him to take the parsonage house. It was a proper purchase given that the parson had long since retired and no one had taken over his position. The country parson was almost a thing of the past as it was no longer a position that guaranteed an income from rents and such. Some survived the change in economy. One might argue they were true believers or some such. Most, however, disappeared. Tom Riddle had seen to the purchase of this parsonage house. It was on the market for ages and had few takers. For him, it offered a degree of seclusion. He was just a buyer and, as far as the locals were concerned, probably foreign at that so they left him alone. The added factor was that the magicals would never suspect this move.

But it was not his brilliance in real estate deals that captured his attention this day. The parsonage had a nice, large room for official business. It was not the throne room he believed he deserved and one day would have, but it would meet his immediate purposes. It would not impress a visitor, but Tom was certain he would, at least those who would be arriving today.

Twelve wizards had soon gathered for the meeting. Seven were operators, survivors of the raids earlier that summer. Three were high placed moles within the Ministry of Magic and the remaining two were Wormtail and Severus Snape. They all bowed when Voldemort entered the room and remained bowing as he took a seat before them.

"It has been a most inauspicious beginning," Voldemort began. "When I returned to you last year, I believed as many of you did that our ultimate success was a foregone conclusion and all that we needed was a little time. I still believe it should have been, but it seems I was thwarted at just about every turn by the incompetence of my so called loyal followers. In the past failure earned my displeasure and my displeasure did not bode well for those who failed me. That is still the case. Unfortunately, those whose failings have cost us most

dearly managed to get themselves killed or incarcerated almost as if they intended such a result to evade their punishment.

"It should have been simple. All that was asked was for a group of my trained Death Eaters to capture, corner or kill a teenaged boy. Their first assignment was to capture him and use him to obtain a prophecy. And what was the result? A dozen of my best soldiers were thwarted by children! The boy escaped, the prophecy was lost to us forever and eleven of my so called best now rot in Azkaban, including that incompetent Malfoy!

"We then made another attempt, this time to kill that boy. We sent thirty-six Death Eaters against five targets, only two of which were expected to resist. What were the results? Eight of our friends returned, three of them seriously injured. Sixteen were killed and the rest were captured. And what results did they achieve? Not much and certainly not what we intended. They managed to kill the head of DMLE and a few Aurors in a diversion. Otherwise, they killed an old woman and a lunatic. None of the primary targets were even spotted and the boy made no appearance at all. Both of those missions must be considered failures.

"Then there's the most recent debacle. Twelve of our number decided to do a little freelance work for the former Senior Undersecretary. Sixteen others were roped into that operation as ministry employees including all six of our brethren who 'guard' Azkaban prison. We know for certain that twenty of them were killed. The other eight have gone missing and are presumed dead. Finally, two of our number happened to be in the office when Potter, claiming to be the Earl of Darby, stopped by for a chat that left them and Umbridge dead. I won't believe the little brat has any connection to the Arbiter of Death, but it's a fact that he somehow managed to kill three people within feet of the Minister's Office and get away clean, a feat I seriously doubt my own Death Eaters could accomplish. In the last two months we've lost sixty-nine of our number: forty-six are dead or presumed dead and twenty-three are in Azkaban. And as we no longer have any of our number among the guards, we cannot hope to repatriate our friends. For the foreseeable future, they are dead to us.

"Our losses can be replaced. We have yet to seriously tap into the generation that was too young to stand with us during the last war. But while losses can be replaced, we cannot hope to prevail if we continue to suffer slaughter after slaughter. It is clear to me that fourteen years of peace has made you lose your edge. You've grown soft and comfortable in your lives and that softness manifested itself in combat as you were overwhelmed by forces that should have cowered before you. That means we will spend our time for the foreseeable future recruiting and training. I will not authorize any combat missions or political moves until our forces are rebuilt to my satisfaction. That means RTK (Rape, Torture, Kill) missions only and again only with my prior approval as I am not confident that any group of you can raid a Muggle home and have sport with the residents without coming to harm yourselves."

"What about Potter?" a voice asked.

"Our information is that he's fled the country for good. Isn't that right, Severus?"

Severus nodded. "We believe he left the country not long after leaving Hogwarts for the summer. This was not discovered until after the reading of the Will of the late Sirius Black on July 10th. Dumbledore had three people tasked to guard the place where he was to spend the summer, two of whom disappeared following the Will reading and have not been seen since. The third reported nothing out of the ordinary, but his watch occurred at times when he might not have noticed anything. In addition, we learned that the Muggles who lived there had moved out of the country by around the date of the Will reading. We also know now that the Granger girl and her family left the country before the end of June. Their home has been emptied and is up for sale. The only other time Potter is said to have been spotted was that incident at the Ministry, to which there was only one live witness - or so that witness claimed - and he has since absconded. In my opinion, the murders at the Ministry were probably his doing and not Potter's. But it is clear that Potter has cleared off and has no known intention of returning. Potter and four others of the Ministry Six have also notified Hogwarts of their permanent withdrawal from school. True, one of those four is known to have been bound to Potter as his Concubine. But the fact remains



he has withdrawn from Hogwarts and there are no records indicating he's transferred to any other school in Britain."

"The Wizarding World's Savior has done a runner," Voldemort chuckled. "He is no longer a threat to us so we need not worry ourselves about him."

"Surely there's someone who should pay for our disasters," a voice said.

"CRUCIO!" and the man screamed under Voldemort's Torture Curse for a few seconds. "You seem to have forgotten your manners and your tone, Avery," Voldemort said when he released the curse. "You've also forgotten the object lesson. We are in no position to pursue vendettas! We must rebuild for now."

"There's always the Weasley boy," another voice suggested. He too felt the effects of the torture curse.

"Fools, the lot of you!" Voldemort said after he released the curse. "You've tried that sort of thing and it left us with sixty-nine lost to us! Until we are ready, only I will decide what is in our interest aside from RTK missions into the Muggle World for training. The Weasley boy is useless to us! Potter abandoned him! Killing him would be pointless and lest you forget, he's under Dumbledore's protection. I will not risk further losses to kill an underage blood traitor who does not matter in the long run. You tried it once and got slaughtered. He's not worth a wand! If you're so intent on revenge, then I would suggest a soft target, one that would mean something and one not under Dumbledore or the Ministry's protections. I would suggest killing Draco Malfoy!"

"Milord?" Severus responded in shock.

"It's quite simple, Severus," Voldemort replied. "House Malfoy was in charge of our finances and failed to plan for what turned out to be the very real possibility that the scion of that House would not be the next Lord Black. The real Lord Black set the Goblins against our former properties, confiscating everything of value to collect on unpaid rents. Entire vaults have been emptied due to Lucius's oversight! Then his

wife obtains an annulment and absconds to who knows where. Were Lucius a free man, I would kill him for his foolish arrogance. I'd kill Bellatrix as well as she was certain of the line of succession and was wrong! They never bothered to determine if Lord Arcturus Black had disinherited the Blood Traitor. They assumed! That assumption cost us millions! Arguably that mistake set us back even more than the losses we've suffered. If an example is necessary, then that example will be the permanent termination of House Malfoy!

"I would ask you to do the deed, Severus, but I'm aware you chose to be the brat's Godfather and therefore cannot lift your hand against him even when warranted."

Severus relaxed for a moment.

"Rookwood?" Voldemort asked.

"Milord?" the former Unspeakable from the Department of Mysteries replied.

"Termination of House Malfoy is your mission. I'd prefer it be done before the brat can hide behind Dumbledore at that school."

"Milord!" Rookwood bowed.

"You alone, Rookwood," Voldemort added. "If this hit should go pear shaped, I'd rather lose only one and not a dozen or more. Don't look so disappointed Severus. Your own reports of the boy suggest he has few uses to us. He lacks his father's political instincts and has failed to truly apply himself to his studies, resting on his family name rather than his ambition and abilities. His exit from the genetic pool will be of no loss to our cause and will send a message that we're still here and to be feared."

"Now, Severus, having spared you of the onerous duty of dispatching you Godson, I have further use of your talents in areas that will not run afoul of such loathsome magical oaths. First of all, as our resident at Hogwarts, I can only hope that you will be able to provide us with recruits to our cause?"

"Milord," Severus nodded.

"Next, I would like your recommendation for a young lad for a special mission, for which - should he live - he shall earn his mark. I am well aware of Dumbledore's sexual persuasion as perverse as it is. I would like your thoughts on a young man who would be willing to get close to him, if you catch my meaning. When the time is right, I shall ask this young man to take advantage of his - er - access to kill the old bugger. Dumbledore is our gravest threat. I would prefer he be removed before we make our own moves to achieve our destiny. A nice young lad who catches the old bugger's eye and attentions would do nicely. Surely, you can supply us with such a trap, Severus?"

Severus merely nodded. He would have recommended Draco as the lad had such tendencies and he knew Dumbledore fancied the boy as his wenches were often asked to take Polyjuice to look like Draco for the Old Man, although Draco was not as particular about plumbing as Dumbledore was. But Draco was now on the Dark Lord's death list and nothing would change that. Killing Dumbledore could have made Draco, but the Dark Lord would not grant the lad the chance. He had to save Draco, but in so doing Draco would never be able to follow in his father's footsteps.

"Excellent! That is all Gentlemen." Voldemort then left the room without looking back.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1996 - Gringotts Branch, Pottersport, Charenwell

Harry's meeting with Bill the day before had proven to be a crash course in Goblin history and culture, and not the kind of history he could have expected to learn from Professor Binns at Hogwarts. There was no way that Binns or any other magical would accept the possibility that much of civilization may have had Goblin origins. Goblins had come from the East over five thousand years ago and why they came was unknown even to them. They came originally as merchants and craftsmen. They were adept at metal work and stone work as well and their skills soon were evident in human world.

Goblins claimed to be the first writers. They developed writing in their form to keep track of accounts and such. The human form of writing on clay tablets with a stylus, which would one day lead to the Greek and Hebrew alphabets and from them the Roman and Arabic, all could arguably trace their roots to the Goblin scripts. Goblins were also the first to see the magical potential of writing and from their ancient studies arose the use of Runes, which were then soon developed by human magicals.

Goblins were also the first to invent money and banking, long before the humans had moved away from what was a barter economy. The predecessors of the modern Galleon, Sickles and Knuts predated human coinage by about a thousand years. Interest, investments, letters of credit, bank drafts, all were available in Goblin commerce long before they were even concepts in the human world. Humans had sole credit for the later invention of credit cards, speculative stock exchanges, and similar things that all but enslaved them to banks and bankers. Goblins would concede they were profit driven. But to them, humans were just plain greedy and exploitative.

Harry was told that in Goblin culture, the most serious crime one could commit was theft. Even what would be considered petty theft was a serious crime in their society and would result in harsh punishment. It seemed straight forward enough until one learned of the Goblin notion of Shakash. Goblins had remained craftsmen and their works be it in jewelry and baubles or in weapons and armor, were revered in the magical world. The Goblins were more than willing to sell to humans. But they had the notion of Shakash which was very foreign to humans. Certain exceptional examples - the master work of a craftsman one which brought honor to him, his family and clan, were deemed Shakash. While Shakash could be transferred to anyone for a price, for the Goblins it was always the understanding that Shakash would be returned when its user no longer had a need for it. Shakash items were rented, not sold. Most Goblin made items were not Shakash and they were truly sold away by their maker. But some were declared Shakash and humans generally did not understand that in acquiring Shakash they were obligated to return the item to the Maker or his clan when they no longer had a need for it. For Goblins, Shakash was not to be given away for any reason. It belonged to the clan and it was expected that

it would one day be returned. Humans who gave away such items or kept them as heirlooms were considered thieves.

But there was little recourse for the Goblins. They had long ago negotiated away their right to call wizards to account for Shakash theft in exchange for their total domination of magical banking. It was, for them, an acceptable compromise as they now all but controlled the magical economy and the Shakash thieves were allowed their boon. Shakash was now seldom sold to humans and those humans from families that were deemed as thieves were treated with scorn in the various Gringotts banks. Most magicals assumed this was just the way Goblins were. They were unaware that they had an ancestor whom the Goblins considered a thief and that they were thieves by affiliation and treated as such.

Wizards considered Goblins warlike creatures. They were martial and trained in the combat arts, but as Bill explained they trained not to fight but so they would not have to. There had been occasions when Goblin clans had fought against each other for one reason or another. Most of those occasions were unknown to wizard history. What the wizards remembered in their histories were the Goblin Wars. Despite what was written in the wizard histories, not one of those wars against the Goblins was started by the Goblins. Every war was a result of some attempt by wizards to subjugate the Goblins and, most likely, to gain control over the gold and currency. In combat, one might say the wars were a draw. The Goblins were quite capable as warriors, far more so than the wizards who looked down on them. But they proved even more capable at the negotiating table. While popular wizard history suggested that the Goblins surrendered, the Goblins gained far more at the bargaining table than wizards were inclined to admit. The Goblin stranglehold on finance and banking was one such gain and for it the wizards received a pledge that the Goblins would never again seek to acquire wands. The fact was that the Goblins never had any interest in wands. They used that to force negotiations which, in the end, granted them all they really wanted. No wizard could open a bank on their own within the Goblin domains, which included all of Europe and then some. Only Charenwell was allowed to have its own monetary system for Charenwell had never made war on the Goblins nor had it ever made any attempt to control the Goblin banks.

Actually, there was only one Goblin bank in the whole world. Gringotts was that bank, although it had scores of "national branches" and numerous sub branches. There were, in fact, sixty-five national branches stretching from Persia (modern day Iran) and the Caspian Sea in the East to the Atlantic including Charenwell and the four national Branches of Britain. In some cases, they corresponded to the magical and/or muggle nationalities and boundaries but in many cases they did not. Each National Branch was run by a Goblin Clan and the Clan Chief sat on the Gringotts Board of Directors. A National Branch might have only one bank or a main bank and several sub-branches. That arrangement depended upon the relationship between the Goblins and the Wizard society that used the bank(s). England, for example, had only one branch in London. Scotland had two, one in Edinburgh and another in Glasgow. Wales had two, one in Swansea and another in Holyhead. Ireland had four: Belfast, Dublin, Galway and Lienster. Charenwell already had nine, including Port of Darby and the main branch in Pottersport, one in each town with more than six-hundred permanent residents. Harry learned that it was Charenwell's preference for non-magical travel that led to the proliferation of bank branches.

What confused Harry was Bill's description of bank monetary policy. Arguably, for most people it made no difference really. Every account under 100,000 Galleons was guaranteed in cash on demand. But larger accounts, like Harry's and those used by the really wealthy or governments were not guaranteed for cash payments above that amount. The truth was there was not that amount of Galleons anywhere. Were there to be the banker's fear of a run on the bank when their account holders lost faith in the system, most would get back what they had invested with at least some interest. It was the rich who would suffer, at least if their money was sitting entirely in account. About eighty percent of the wealth of the wizarding economy (most of which was held by governments and not individuals) just did not exist in cold, hard cash. It was all lines in a ledger somewhere and maybe in piles of gold bullion, which were unusable as cash - as part of a long standing treaty.

This information explained to Harry why he spent so much time signing checks to the various contractors building the Manors and

Jamestown, for example, rather than just handing over bags of gold or paper money; as Charenwell had converted to paper currency early in the century and was the only magical population in Europe that had done so. This was something that Goblins were trying to change. The most vigorous economy in magical Europe was Charenwell. The Goblins believed that this was due to their currency which allowed them to deal with non-magicals with ease. The Americas and far east were similar in that regard and economically were far better off than magical Europe. But, except through Charenwell, the Goblins had few dealings outside of Europe, which was the real reason they wanted the Europeans to change. There were profits to be made that would be greater if the Goblins could eliminate the gold standard.

It was an odd situation. By treaty Goblins had earned the right to be the sole bankers in their magical lands and were the sole minter of wizarding money. To change over to a form of currency not tied to gold would mean that the Galleons, Sickles and Knuts they minted would no longer have value as currency. But there was a method to the Goblin madness, one which most wizards had failed to appreciate. By the same treaty, the exchange rate had been fixed to five Pounds per Galleon. Converting other muggle money to Galleons was based upon their exchange rate with the British Pound. When the treaty had been negotiated, the British Pound had been the most stable currency in Europe and was the standard, a fact that both remained and had changed as now the American Dollar was also considered a standard, at least in the non-magical world. British magicals believed that a pound based exchange rate supported their belief of their superiority over the rest of the magical world, not realizing it was the strength of their often reviled Muggle neighbors' economy and not their own that had decided the issue. Also, when the treaty was signed, a Galleon was worth about five pounds or five gold sovereigns. This was at a time when a person earning a hundred Pounds or forty Galleons a year was making a very nice living. A Galleon was minted from real gold and while it may have been worth only five Pounds almost three centuries ago, it was now worth over a hundred and fifty pounds if sold for its gold yet it still exchanged at five Pounds per Galleon. The Goblins were concerned with currency speculation. A person could enter one of their banks and exchange a hundred pounds for twenty Galleons then, in theory, sell those

Galleons for Pounds and walk away with a 2,400 Pound profit. Fortunately, most wizards would never figure that out and the few who tried learned that it was illegal to sell Galleons in the Muggle economy. Moreover, the Goblins considered the sale of Galleons to Muggles as a form of theft and, by treaty, were allowed to punish offenders according to their laws at least to an extent as execution - their usual punishment for thieves and deceivers - was rarely ever imposed on magicals unless they allowed the malefactor to suffer such a fate. Instead, punishment usually resulted in a significant if not total reduction in the offender's accounts and a life time ban from the bank which basically meant they could not exchange money anywhere, or save it safely or borrow. Bill was well aware of this as one of the most celebrated cases of currency speculation and the Goblins' reaction to it was the brother of one of his ancestors. The result, among other foibles, had all but wiped out the Weasley fortune.

"There is one other thing you need to know about Goblins, Harry," Bill said. "They believe in honor above all things, even prowess in battle. When they speak, what they say can be taken to the Bank, as it were. They do not understand deception in words. What you say must be factual and truthful. But, they also do not read in anything. What you don't say provides a degree of ambiguity which they accept. What they do say, you can take as spoken. But to deal with them always remember what is left unspoken."

Bill would be there with Harry as a financial advisor and as an expert on Goblin affairs and Fleur would be with him as his assistant. Harry would bring Cissy with him and no others. Most of his ladies were busy with their own responsibilities or training with the Air Force. Padma and Parvati, who were due to start their training the next week, had been tasked to plan for a luncheon the next day for the entire family and selected guests for the coming weekend's weddings. The remainder of Harry's girls, aside from Cathy, were spending time with their families. Harry heard Cathy was either spending the day with her best friend Eleanor or Gabrielle or both.

Harry was surprised at the huge room where the meeting was to be held. After all, there were only four in his party and five Goblins. He was not surprised to see Griphook, who was now in charge of the House Potter and Black accounts managed by Gringotts London. Nor



was he surprised to see Sharlock, who managed the Ducal Accounts in Charenwell, although then again maybe he was. What had any of this had to do with his accounts? This was about knew bank branches, wasn't it? This explained Tarmack, who was Head of the Charenwell Clan and director of Gringotts Charenwell. But it also did not explain Ragnok, Head of Gringotts London and supposedly the High Director of all the Gringotts Britain branches and clans. Nor did it explain Irsuk the Vile, who was Head of the Irish Gringotts Clans. What did opening three new Charenwell branches all under the Charenwell Clan have to do with these other Goblins and clans?

"First order of business," Tarmack said without and pre-meeting formalities, "the new Gringotts Charenwell Branches. Pursuant to our agreement dating back to 1478 and the reign of your ancestor Duke James I, we are asked to open a local Gringotts Branch in any community where the permanent population is deemed to have at least six hundred souls. As of today, there are four branches in East Farm, three in West Farm, two in North Farm and one in South Farm. We find that as a result of recent relocations, three more communities meet the Agreement specifications: Magoran Bay in Northwest Territory with a population as of sunset yesterday of 1,792, The Manors in West Farm with a population as of sunset yesterday of 804 and Jamestown in Southwest Territory with a population as of sunset yesterday of 796. The new branches will open within the week at locations duly marked and readily recognizable. These will offer full services in regards to accounts but personal property vaults will be limited at first as we will need time to dig and build the vaults and install security measures. We also now understand you intend to build at least one other city?"

Harry nodded. "Lilysburg. It'll be on the coast in the Northeast Territory. Construction is set to begin next week and we expect to begin populating it by October. It should meet your branch requirements not later than the middle of that month."

Tarmack nodded. "We will be prepared. We have younger ones who would look forward to the opportunity. Next, pursuant to the Agreement on Coinage of 1278 as signed by Duke William II and the Agreement on Notes of Exchange of 1878 as signed by Duke James VI upon his investiture following the death of his father Duke Charlus I,

and as you have assumed your roles and titles, we are requested and required to redesign the coins and notes of Charenwell. As you should know, the 100 Pound note and 1 pound coin by treaty and custom will continue to bear the likeness of Elizabeth II, the current Queen of England to whom you're allied. Also by said treaties and custom, the 20 Pound note and 20 Pence - also known as Shilling - coin will bear your likeness as current Duke of Charenwell..."

"Great," Harry moped.

"... and the ten and five Pence coins shall bear the likeness of the prior two Dukes: Charles I and Charlus II. And the one Pence coin may either bear the likeness of Duke Justin I or Dargoth, First Lord of the Isle. Currently, it is Justin and we would recommend a change."

"Fine," Harry said.

"We are also recommending that your likeness also be upon the ten Pound note."

"Why?"

"As Earl of Darby."

"What's the difference?" Harry asked.

"The portraits on the face will be different in aspect," Tarmack said. "It is the back that we hope for your support. The backs will have a portrait of your respective wives and - later - children as Duke and Earl."

Harry nodded. He really didn't care to have his face on any such things, but knew that the Queen also had to submit to such petty humiliations as having the likeness of her face stuffed into a vending machine or used to pay for anything really. He was asked to designate the "faces" for the fifty, five and one Pound notes. The rules, such as there were any were that the person had to be dead and had to have a "significant" connection to Charenwell and its history. Fortunately, his parents qualified as his father would have been Duke one day had it not been for what had happened and his

mother was the wife of an heir apparent. The manner of their deaths qualified and James and Lily Potter would appear on the fifty Pound note. For the one Pound note, Harry chose Harstig for now at least. Harstig, Fifth Earl of Darby, Eleventh Lord of the Isle and Nineteenth Lord Potter had been the wizard who had aided William of Normandy in his conquest of Britain. Harry, seeing as he was asked to do likewise, felt it appropriate for what he thought of as the "War Pound." The five Pound note would have the likeness of Mistress Alice, second concubine and third wife of Harry's Great-great grandfather Duke Edward IV. She was the one who, unable to bear children, had dedicated her life to study and translating the vast Potter archives. Although her History of House Potter had never been finished, her works on the languages she studied and her poetry in English, Anglo-Saxon and Charenwell Gaelic were published and very popular in certain circles within Charenwell. Harry chose her to symbolize the benefits of education even if he could not understand a word of many of her works.

"Oddly or ironically, it is fitting you chose one of the wives of Edward IV," Tarmack commented. "As you are no doubt aware, Edward had his Consort and five Concubines and between them sired fourteen daughters before finally siring a son. But we'll get to that later - not today."

Sharlock, who handled the Potter Accounts in Charenwell, spoke next. "The four point two million Galleons demanded from the government of magical Britain for the inexplicable enslavement of forty-two Charenwell witches has been confiscated from their vaults following affirmation of the demand by the ICW and is now in a temporary trust vault for distribution to the families of those witches. Each family will receive an equal share of the boon, subject to a ten percent acquisition fee to your lordship."

"What?" Harry protested.

"It's standard," Bill explained. "A ten percent fee for a boon is not much when you consider that otherwise the boon might be taxable by the government. Due to the fact it's now a boon and not income, it's not taxed and the taxes on this amount would be a lot more than ten percent even back in Britain."

"Fine," Harry sighed.

Sharlock continued. "The additional four point two million requested from the British Magical Government has been denied at face value by the ICW..."

"I was told to expect that much," Harry said.

Sharlock nodded. "The two million in approved reparations has been transferred from the British account to the Charenwell account."

"Not my account?"

"Reparations were due to Charenwell for the attempted invasion as per your request. You did not state the attempt was on your person, even if the survivors have said as much. Were it just an attempt on your person, the ICW would have disapproved the full amount of your demand."

Harry nodded. "My government can probably use the money."

"Indeed it can," Tarmack commented.

"We're not broke, are we?"

"Far from it, but given your expenditures of late and their probable effect on your government's outlays, they can use the money as a stop-gap until such time as your new arrivals are wage earners and new businesses profitable. And, in that regard, Gringotts requests the opportunity to invest in your country, it's new businesses and your future."

"Invest?"

Bill explained the nature of investment. It was, in a way, a loan, except repayment was through profits and not principal and interest and, if a business failed, the investor generally could not get their money back. Banks such as Gringotts seldom devolved into such deals except as middlemen because of the associated risk of loss.

Loans, particularly those secured by valuable collateral, were preferred by Gringotts as they were safe for the bank. Investing was not, certainly not in the case of a new company that could not hope to guarantee long term success.

"Then why?" Harry began.

"We see Charenwell as a future economic power in our world," Tarmack replied. "Even as things stand now, it is the most stable and most vibrant of magical economies within our realm of interest. The others are not worth the effort really. This is the only magical country in Europe with true businesses. Everywhere else, it's shops run by families. There is that here as well. But profit flows from volume. Your agricultural businesses are large scale operations with several family or small businesses feeding into the operations. You're now moving into manufacturing on a large scale with an eye towards export markets and other ventures with an eye beyond your shores. The other magicals don't think that way and miss out on huge profit potentials. We see investing in Charenwell's economy as having a huge, long term upside for us and our people with little real risk aside from Galleons we can afford to risk."

"Why are you asking this?" Harry said. "Why do you need my permission to do so?"

"We have not asked this of Charenwell before," Tarmack replied. "We have tried directly and indirectly to do something similar in the past in Britain and in other countries where we saw businesses that had potential only to be rebuffed by either the businesses in question or their governments all refusing to do business with us due to our race. We consider them fools for their shortsightedness but it was not deemed important enough for us to risk another war with your kind."

"Bill?"

"The Goblins are fair dealers when it comes to money and profit, Harry. Arguably they're more fair than most humans in that regard. Capital - as in money - is what makes businesses work in the end. They need money to make money and most businesses cannot reach their full potential - assuming they have one - without outside capital

to allow them to grow. Growing business means money in dividends and such to investors who are in it for a piece of the action."

"I've heard my Uncle complain about investors and stock markets...", Harry began.

"Stock markets exist to allow people to invest in companies," Bill said. "Their failing is far too many who do invest are not interested in the long term, rather they want their money quickly. It's the gamblers and speculators who create an artificial market, one which is not based upon reality but guess work and hunches and quick profits and not the long term potential of the companies in play. This makes the market volatile if there's enough money in that is not there for the long haul. Goblins are not gamblers when it comes to their money. Were they to invest in a company it's because they see the long term potential for them. They'd see more return over time than they could expect from merely loaning their money out. Stock markets make it easy to move money into businesses and out again - perhaps too easy."

"We're not asking for that," Tarmack said. "We think long term and we see long term potential from which profit is possible for all concerned. We do not wish to see our gold vanish when some major investor sees a need to take profit before it's real..."

"Charenwell Air," Sharlock said. "Short term, it's a money pit. Long term, however, there's a huge upside. Weasley Industries looks to be both a short term and long term gain, assuming they have the workforce. Grunnings Munitions has potential as well as does Potter Chemical and Darby Technologies, just to name a few. But they need capital to thrive. While it's true you're providing it, it can't hurt for others to provide as well, can it?"

"I noticed you left out the businesses that existed before I arrived here," Harry commented.

"The Four Farms of Charenwell enjoy the highest standard of living in the magical world," Tarmack said. "A 'poor' person born here will enjoy a better life financially speaking than many 'successful' magicals elsewhere, or at least those that don't come from

generational wealth. But it took centuries for your people to reach that level. You're about to double the size of your population. The new people need jobs and jobs that pay well so that they don't look to compete with the current residents. If your immigrant population has no need to seek employment in the existing lands - or at least little need to - the existing residents would be less likely to take issue with the new arrivals. Successful businesses in the new communities will mean jobs and comfortable incomes for the new arrivals. As you're already producing far more food than you need, that means the likelihood of a conflict between the newcomers and the long time residents would be all but non-existent. But to do that, the economic base you're planning must work and must work from inception. No company makes a huge profit at first. You need money to pay your employees. You're building industries from nothing and, right now, nothing means that aside from imported industry there's no money to pay the wages of the employees who will one day make that company work. You are already heavily invested in those companies and far more. We merely ask for the chance to get in on the action."

"We see it as a much safer investment than tomb raiding," Ragnok added speaking for the first time.

"Bill?" Harry asked.

"They have a point, Harry. You're sinking millions into those businesses not to mention the towns and all that support them. Additional capital can't hurt. They're not looking for control or anything like that, only an opportunity for profit which is what you'll have anyway when all is said and done."

"And what about you, Bill? It seems this only affects Fred and George and their efforts. What about you, your Dad, Charlie and your families?"

"We all have a stake in Weasley Industries. It's Fred and George's venture, but we're all in. We believe that if they're given half a chance, they'll make a killing and we'll make enough to supplement our own incomes to support our families. Dad's certain that none of his new wives or children or daughters-in-law or grandchildren will have to stretch their resources the way we had to growing up. We all hope

this will be true and Fred and George want it to be so. Those of us who are not working for my brothers and are old enough are working. We're in your Air Force which, while not a great salary, is better than nothing and is a worthwhile thing to do. Those of us who are not and are old enough for jobs are taking them. You've gone out on many limbs recently, Harry. For us perhaps more than we deserved to expect from you for you have effectively given us what Mother had planned. We don't want to see you having made a mistake with us. We all want Weasley Industries to take off so that we don't feel that our being here is charity."

"The key thing Charenwell has always had is the fact you don't have to hide from the Muggles," Tarmack said. "Much of the rest of the magical world is cottage industries, things that can be done from a house or a small shop, but no larger. This is to hide it from others. It's limiting. Charenwell has no such limitations placed upon it. We see investing here as the best investment in the magical world."

"Fine. Done."

"That simple?" Bill asked.

"You see anything wrong with it?" Harry replied.

"No, it's just that..."

"With all I have on my plate, economics and banking are way down on my list for now. We can use the help and all they ask in return is a cut of profits any investor would expect, right?"

Bill nodded.

"So that's decided. Is there more? I am curious as to why the Irish branch of Gringotts is here."

"Milord," Irsuk the Vile replied, "given our customers are seeking independence from Magical England - and yes we know of it. The money shows this to be the case and no, Gringotts London and the other branches are not saying this to their customers. Given that Ireland seeks your support in its endeavor, it is of importance to



Gringotts to determine your - forgive me, Sir - commitment to that endeavor."

"Personally," Harry said, "and in my opinion as part of my duty, I will do what it takes - within reason, of course - to see Ireland free. That being said, my ability to act at this time is severely limited and the matter is, for now, in the hands of the concerned diplomats."

"As terse as your response was," Irsuk said, "it is what we need to know. While Gringotts takes no position in such matters, it should be noted we do prefer to hedge our bets. Galleons are flying out of the other British banks - Irish Galleons, mind you - and my concern was whether this was a momentary thing or the beginnings of..."

"We are not concerned with the internal affairs of Wizards," Ragnok said.

"No," Irsuk agreed, "we are not. But should Magical Ireland become independent, that is in the interest of my Clan and Branch."

Several minutes of discussions followed. Harry's concern was whether the London Clan, Irish Clan or any other Gringotts Clan would tip off the Ministry of Magic that Magical Ireland was going to one day declare independence and that Charenwell had pledged its support. Nothing else mattered to Harry as it seemed the Goblins were arguing about accounts and some such. They eventually assured him that the financial matters were of no real concern to him and that the Goblins were not about to tell anyone - other than other interested Goblin branches - that Ireland was moving towards independence. It remained possible that a Goblin might be willing to spill what the Goblins considered "inside information" to what they also considered a "foreign power," and the price of such betrayal would be official declaration of the offending Goblin as a lunatic or traitor and his summary execution. Harry was assured that for some probably bizarre reason the Magicals in Britain would take the Goblins at their word on that.

Griphook rose. "Milord, per custom and your request of July 10th, we have inventoried the Black properties and the vaults and assets seized from those in default to House Black. All items of a dark nature

as well as all items of no significant value, save for certain items of the House of Black, have been disposed of. To the extent any of the aforesaid items could be sold, they have been and the proceeds from said sale have been added to your account as spelled out in this report," he said passing over a thick file. "Likewise, with two exceptions, all items of Shakash have been reclaimed and a ten percent finder's fee has been added to your account."

"Two items?" Harry asked.

"They may be of interest to you," Griphook nodded. He placed a large, gold item that was on a chain before Harry. "This was found during the inventory of the personal property at the Black place in London."

Harry picked up the item. It appeared to have small hinges and a catch. He opened it easily and say that the inside had two glass windows. "It looks like a locket," he said. "I know nothing about these things, but it looks pretty cheap if you ask me, almost crude."

Griphook smiled. "I can assure you the locket itself is not Goblin made. Look at the front and back pieces."

Harry did. Aside from being gold he noticed two stylized snakes on each side shaped like the letter "S." He looked at Griphook.

"The front and back pieces are two of thirteen medallions of pure gold that were part of a Shakash necklace made around a thousand years ago for one Salazar Slytherin," Griphook explained. "The medallions themselves are Shakash only by implication as it was the thirteen gemstones that also made up the necklace that were the true masterwork of the Jeweler and Runes Crafter who made the item. We have long since recovered the gems as well as eleven of the medallions. These are the last two.

"Upon discovering this desecrated Shakash, we investigated to find out its history. We knew that the original necklace had somehow found its way to the family Gaunt, distant descendants of Salazar Slytherin. We knew this because the jewels and ten of the thirteen medallions were sold or pawned by that family between 1510 and 1820 and that was how we were able to reclaim them in the end. This

locket was made from two of the remaining medallions in 1869 by an enchanter in Knockturn Alley, London. He was paid with a third medallion. The locket itself is of little value now. The magic that made the medallions part of a Shakash item dissipated when the original necklace was broken up and the value of this item is limited to the fact its made from solid gold worth about eight Galleons today."

"Why was it given to an enchanter and not a jeweler for the work?" Cissy asked. "Was there an enchantment placed upon it?"

"Indeed there was," Griphook said. "Traces can still be detected, but we knew from the enchanter's records what it was. The locket was made at the request of Emil Gaunt in 1869 as a 'gift' for his daughter Tamara who was then thirteen. The enchantment compelled the girl to mate with her brother Delmar. The Gaunts had taken blood purity to its extreme, probably due to the fact that they had no money or status and could not arrange proper marriages and they were uneducated so there was no chance for them to interact with magicals of their own age."

"That's vile," Harry said.

Griphook shrugged. "We Goblins do not question the ways of wizards unless their ways affect our people. Tamara gave birth to two children, a son and a daughter Hardin and Cholera. We believe the daughter received the accursed locket for she mated with her brother. Cholera also had two children, a son and a daughter named Marvolo and Demelza and it seems clear that Demelza received the locket for she mated with her brother. They had a son and daughter: Morphin born in 1908 and Marope born in 1910."

"Wait," Cissy said. "You're saying that this Tamara's Great-granddaughter was born about forty years after the locket was made?"

"The Gaunts mated young and died young. Oddly, the longest lived was Morphin who spent most of his life in Azkaban dying at age sixty-nine in 1977. His Great-great Grandfather Emil was the next longest lived dying at forty-six. Emil's wife - who was his first cousin - died at age thirty-seven. Tamara, Demelza and Marope died as teenagers

from childbirth. Cholera was twenty-eight when she died. For whatever reason, they were unusually short lived for magicals.

"Now the last Gaunt girl, Marope, was a Squib. We know this from the magical records and it explains why she did not mate with her brother for the enchantment worked on the witch's magic, which she lacked. She seduced - probably by use of potions - a young Muggle named Tom Riddle. The potions obviously failed to keep the young man, for he abandoned her in London. She pawned the locket in Knockturn Alley just a month or two before she died in a Muggle orphanage in childbirth..."

"Tom Marvolo Riddle," Harry, Cissy and Bill said in unison. Cissy and Bill and many others by now had seen Harry's pensieve memories and the encounter down in the Chamber of Secrets had figured prominently in them. Harry had said he thought that one of particular importance for some reason.

"Ah! Then you know of him," Griphook exclaimed.

"He's now known as Voldemort," Harry all but hissed. "He's one of the two Dark Lords that infect magical Britain."

"The other being one Albus Dumbledore," Griphook said as Harry nodded, "who is by his deception the more dangerous of the two."

"Oh?"

"Which is more dangerous?" Griphook asked. "It is the evil you can see or the evil you cannot? The one who styles himself as Voldemort is the evil you can see. But we Goblins are all too aware of the 'Leader of the Light' who, while not delving into the darkest of arts - at least not in a manner that can be discovered - is as evil if not more so than his Dark Lord rival. Truth is, Voldemort is a rank amateur compared to Dumbledore. We Goblins know they both have the same goal: absolute control of the magical world under their rule and subject to their world view which is similar. They both want a permanent ruling elite born and trained to rule with a permanent governing class born and trained to govern the world. They seek out Purebloods and the ambitious to their causes, although both favor

neither. Voldemort wants followers bound to his will - slaves who will do his bidding ruling the vast majority of even lower slaves. Dumbledore is more subtle. But the end result is the same. Enslavement of our world to serve his ends - a vindication of his family, long bereft of its once exalted status. Dumbledore is cloaked as the 'Leader of the Light,' the promoter of Muggle Borns and one who would deal with Muggles and bridge the gap. He still controls the Wizengamot and through it the Ministry of Magic - although now that by their magic they cannot meet, that control has been diminished..."

Harry grunted. "We have the votes here that have paralyzed him. But to remove him from his postings..."

"Would require you to either appear in the Wizengamot Chambers or send a proxy," Cissy finished. "You or they would be at risk from Death Eater attack as you well know. But as you now know, Dumbledore is a greater threat."

Harry nodded. There was mounting evidence that the Old Man was adept at mind magics. Not just the obvious skills of Legilimency and Occlumency, but the ability to actually alter a mind to his desire. There were references to such magics in the Potter Library and more in the other works they had since received from House Black and other sources. A skilled Mind Alterer could all but literally change a person. It explained why Harry's father who was from a long line that saw House Dumbledore as an enemy, would agree with Harry's mother that Dumbledore knew what was best over the warnings of his own family. Harry's father for certain and perhaps his mother as well had been altered, probably when more subtle methods of control had failed or were failing.

"He's tried to destroy my family," Harry growled, "he's tried to end my line! His goal was to get control of an heir for his own ends! He's even enslaved some of my people! Not even Voldemort was so vicious. There can be no peace with magical Britain so long as he and his line lives."

"Harry," Cissy said with caution, "do you realize you've just declared a Blood Feud?"

Harry shrugged. "Does it really matter?"

"No. Not really. He's certainly earned it. I just ... the Blacks never trusted the Old Man either. But to learn that ... V-Voldemort was ... sorry, Harry ... was a Mudblood of the worst order? His mother was a Squib born from generations of incest? His father a Muggle practically raped by the bint? Most of my life I was told he - Voldemort - was the salvation of Pureblood ideals! I was forced into a marriage to one of that inbred mutt's loyal followers! I was forced into hell for that cretin! Screw the Pureblood ideals! I know you know how I really feel about this rot, but screw them all, Harry."

"Or kill them all?" Griphook suggested.

"Even better!" Cissy said.

"I ... I think we should get back to the task at hand," Bill suggested.

"I wasn't including you, Bill," Cissy said. "Not all Purebloods are evil or corrupted by Dark Lords."

"Very well," Griphook said. "The locket, again. Sold in 1926 to Borgin & Burkes and purchased that same year by one Hepzibah Smith, a collector of historical artifacts but not the sharpest claw in the room. She believed the locket was truly the property of a Hogwarts founder even though lockets did not exist at all a thousand years ago. She was also the 'owner' of our second item of Shakash - and at least she got this one right," Griphook added placing a golden cup on the table. "It's a Goblin made cup that originally belonged to Helga Hufflepuff. There was an enchantment upon it which has long since faded. Smith claims it was an heirloom and perhaps it was, but she also claimed it meant she was an Heir of Hufflepuff which cannot be verified at all. But she bragged about the cup and the locket and such and, in 1946, it came back to haunt her so to speak. Tom Marvolo Riddle was by then a purchaser for Borgin & Burkes and she was a frequent client of his. In 1946, she died under mysterious circumstances and the cup and locket vanished, as did one Tom Marvolo Riddle."

"He stole them?" Harry asked.

"That seems to be the case," Griphook replied. "A sloppy job of it too. Scampering is never a way to avoid suspicion and snuffing the vic only makes it worse - although there was no concrete evidence that he killed her. We believe that he did, however."

"Yes," Harry agreed, "the coward usually sets other people up for that sort of thing. Why else would he hide behind his Death Eaters? For the all powerful Dark Lord he seems to make it an annoying habit to show up with an entourage. Not that terrifying, really."

"So you're gonna just show up and take him on single handed?" Bill chided.

"No. Then again, I don't claim to be any kind of all powerful anything. I'll show up with a real Army and if there's anything left of Voldemort and his slaves, I'll still have an Army to make sure they all snuff it. That's not the point. Griphook? Why do we care about these baubles?"

"The taint on them, Milord," Griphook said. "These are safe to touch, handle and even sell to the unsuspecting buyer, but they should not be."

"Again, why?"

"There's a taint of dark magic on them. The magic itself is gone, but the taint remains. The magic is from the same source, which in itself is unprecedented given the nature of the dark magic, but..."

"Get to the point!" Harry said becoming annoyed.

"These were soul anchors made by the same wizard based upon the signature," Griphook replied.

"Soul anchors?"

"Horcruxes?" Bill interjected. "And what do you mean 'were'? They look fine."

"What the bloody hell are Horcruxes?" Harry asked in frustration. He may have heard the term before. He could not remember. Then again, with all of the information he had been fed - stuffed into his head - over the last several weeks, it was a wonder he could even remember his name at times.

"It is evil magic," Fleur said speaking with disgust and for the first time.

"And it explains a lot," Bill added. "A soul cannot truly pass on unless it's intact," Bill explained. "If you were to separate a part of your soul and anchor it to this plane of existence, while your body could be destroyed, you could not pass on so long as any part of your soul remains anchored to this plane. A horcrux allows for this, although as Fleur said it is a most vile form of magic. It's an ultimate violation of nature and requires the darkest of magics to accomplish and, finally, it requires the soul breaker to commit cold blooded murder to complete the final step of severing a soul fragment and capturing it within the enchanted item. The soul breaker must be thoroughly evil to begin with. There can be no love or compassion in his heart or the whole thing will fail. But if he is that evil, while he's not truly immortal, he cannot be truly killed either. This explains some things."

"Oh?" Harry asked.

Bill nodded. "The soul cannot stand to be separated. It will try to reintegrate itself. This means that a soul fragment trapped within a horcrux will try and find a way to reintegrate with the original soul, usually by taking gradual possession over a person who has access to that horcrux. The anchored disembodied primary soul will behave in a similar fashion, seeking to find a host it can control to find its own way back to a body. Learned about it as a Curse Breaker as there are a few of these things out there."

"Professor Quirrell!" Harry exclaimed.

Bill nodded remembering seeing the memories from Harry's first year. "There were other possible explanations, but what happened to him was consistent to possession by the primary soul fragment. What happened to my sister her First Year is consistent with a few things, but also consistent with contact with a horcrux. I want to kick myself



for not making the connection sooner. I guess I hoped it was not so even after learning Voldemort had somehow made it back." He then turned to the Goblins. "But I don't understand how these could have been horcruxes. The only known ways to destroy the enchantment would have at the very least severely damaged if not destroyed these items."

"You are correct, Mr. Weasley," Griphook said. "All known manners of breaking the enchantment would have seriously damaged these objects. Yet the fact remains - and of this we are certain - they were horcruxes from the same enchanter once and yet they are no longer. It is this conundrum that we believe requires us to bring this to your attention."

"Particularly," Ragnok added, "as you have stated it is your intention to one day destroy Voldemort and his Death Eaters, among others of course. We know these two things were horcruxes once but are no longer. We know they bore the same magical signature meaning they were made by the same wizard. And we know these two items went missing following the suspicious death of Madam Smith and that the one who now calls himself Voldemort was implicated in both the death and the theft. Conclusion: these items were his horcruxes meaning he made at least two of these abominations. It is no stretch to imagine he may have made more than two and so long as even one exists he cannot be truly destroyed. What we do not understand is how these two hateful objects were neutralized."

"Three for certain," Bill said. When Harry looked at him he added. "Riddle's diary." Harry nodded understandingly. Bill turned to the Goblins. "Lord Harry destroyed a third such item, one we know was the creation of Voldemort, about three years ago."

"Stabbed it with a basilisk fang," Harry nodded. "And it certainly looked worse for the encounter, not unmarked like these two items."

"And where did you obtain such a rare item?" Ragnok asked.

"From the basilisk I killed a few moments earlier," Harry shrugged.

"Impossible!" Irsuk protested. "You would've been what? Twelve years old?"

Harry nodded.

"Basilisks are resistant to most magic. Even a very powerful wizard would be lucky to kill one with a wand - assuming he could get close enough to do so."

"I didn't use a wand. I drove a sword into its brain."

"And how did you get close enough to do that? Slaying a basilisk is a feat that requires scores of hunters and many hunters are lost to the eyes of the beast in the melee. Even then, it would take an enchanted sword."

"Its eye had already been put out. And would the Sword of Gryffindor be considered enchanted?" Harry was pretty sure he knew the answer.

"We are aware you have access to that sword," Ragnok said. "Under those circumstances as remarkable as your tale is it becomes plausible. I believe I speak for my colleague in saying it was not our intention to question your honor, but without further explanation your claim was ... dubious. And what have you done with the carcass. We are not aware of any sales from Britain of such a beast or its parts in centuries."

"It lies where it fell," Harry said. "It's in the Chamber of Secrets beneath Hogwarts Castle and, for the time being, I have no intention of returning there."

"Just how large was the beastie?" Sharlock asked. "Even a small one is quite valuable and they take ages to even begin to decompose."

"I really never bothered to measure it," Harry replied. "I'd guess about four feet thick, maybe more and at least forty feet in length."

"We've seen the pensieve memories," Bill added. "I'd say it was a bit larger than that."

"A tale fitting of a Master Warrior of ages gone by," Ragnok said. "It is a pity it is inaccessible for the moment. But the day will come when the enemy lies vanquished and the fields of Magical Britain stained with their blood. When that day arrives, we wish to stand on the field of that victory as allies and once the feasting is over to view this magnificent trophy of yours. Until such day, we will do what we can as a nation to support your efforts against our common enemy. As a token of this, we offer you these former items of Shakash in the hopes they may help."

"I believe that concludes our business for today," Sharlock announced. "Milord Potter, may your enemies be vanquished, their gold fill your vaults and their women service your people!" Without waiting for a reply, the Goblins left.

"Okay," Harry said as they were left alone, "I'm more than a little confused and to be honest am not sure I like the idea of more women."

"The meeting did take a turn for the surreal," Bill agreed. "I think the last bit was merely an honorific - no worries there. After all, they do know about our - erm - collections which is how they probably see it. The first bits were expected: opening the new branches which was by treaty, the currency was also by treaty and the distribution of the reparations by agreement. After that..."

"They asked to invest in Charenwell businesses," Cissy said. "It's never happened before - the Goblins asking for that."

"Most magical businesses are too small to be worthy of their interest in that way," Bill said. "There may be exceptions, but given the degree of distrust most wizards have for Goblins and the fact that the few exceptions are really that, it's not surprising the Goblins have stayed out of the economy aside from banking and such. There was no deception or ulterior motive suggested. Goblins are profit driven and if they see a large, long term profit they will take an interest in it. Basically, they're saying they think what Harry's doing here is worth their interest."

"We could spin that," Cissy said. "Surely the long time residents might have some resentment about the large number of newcomers. To suggest that it's in everyone's interest - that even the Goblins see this - could work to the advantage of all."

"I can't speak for the average Charenwellian," Harry said. "Aside from our Sunday brunches at Martha's and my Saturday jaunts to the Sail Loft Pub - and my haircuts - I really don't get out as much as I should. But from what I've heard there, most are only concerned about losing jobs or their homes to the evacuees and it has never been my intention to allow that and the ones I've spoken to understand that. But emphasizing that the newcomers can benefit all of Charenwell long term is a good idea. Can we trust the Goblins in this, Bill?"

"They placed no conditions on investing aside from what anyone could expect. They want their fair share of the profits based upon how much they put into any given enterprise and accept the risk that it might fail. Had they wanted additional guarantees, they would not have hesitated to ask."

"And these items?" Harry asked after a few moments of thought indicating the locket and the cup.

"My guess is they consider them of more interest to us than to them," Bill said. "They made no conditions about them either, which is interesting. They usually demand conditions for Shakash. What interests me even more was their final suggestion. They didn't come out and say it, but they placed into the potential future discussions the possibility of a real alliance between the Goblin Clans and Charenwell. Again, they suggested no conditions."

"And this is a problem?" Harry asked.

"The Goblins never ally without some conditions, Harry," Bill said. "The interesting point was they did not even suggest any. Usually they ask for a fee or something..."

"The basilisk?" Cissy offered.

"They would have said something," Bill replied. "They are naturally curious, but if the basilisk was the basis for their suggested alliance, they would have asked. They care quite capable of harvesting such a thing and their fees are well known within that profession. It's worth money, after all. No. Whatever they're interested in they're keeping close to their vests for now and it's not money or power or anything like that."

"Should I be worried?" Harry asked.

"I don't think so," Bill replied honestly. "Not really. They might want nothing at all, although that would be highly out of character for them. I can say this, they want no special boon in terms of money or power. It would have been suggested otherwise. And, regardless of how valuable that basilisk is, it's not enough to secure an alliance with all of those clans and something tells me Ragnock was speaking for a larger group than just the Charenwell and British Isles Clans. But whatever it is, they are not yet agreed and therefore have not yet asked even by suggestion. One thing is certain, I think."

"What's that?" Harry asked.

"They will not stand against you or Charenwell."

Harry nodded.

"Any idea about what happened with these?" Fleur asked again indicating the two items left to Harry.

"I have one," Harry said, "but I want Hermione and the others to think about it as well. They're the experts at research after all."

A/N:

"You left us hanging! What do the Goblins want? What happened to the Horcruxes? Did Draco snuff it?"

The Goblin bit was always planned as was what they want but getting it into this story in full now is premature.

I'll let you guess about the horcruxes. The answer has already been suggested.

As for Draco ... stay tuned as well. (Evil smirk)

The truth is also this was getting really long and without a logical break - earlier, for me, as I can guess some of you will debate the break bit.

#### RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how. Changes in abbreviated version are for change in bond status, birthdays and so on.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

HOUSE BLACK

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

George Weasley, age 18.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

12. Greta Mae (Ives) Lupin, age 18(SA-5).

15. Maggie Marshall, age 17 (11/3/78) (SD-5); Original Bond (8/1/95); Concubine Remus (8/21/96).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

15. Ellen Morgan Oldman, age 19 (6/5/77) (SG): Original Bond (7/23/93); Concubine Frank (8/21/96).

Charlie Weasley, age 23.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).

7. Amanda Suzanne Tanner, age 20 (SA-5).

9. Zoe Margaret Nance, age 19 (5/12/77) (SD-5); Original Bond (8/13/93); Concubine Arthur (8/21/96).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

## CHAPTER SEVENTY-TWO: VISITORS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1996 - Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Scotland, U.K.

"Ah Severus," Dumbledore said as Severus Snape was trying to head for the gates to get beyond the wards. "It is indeed fortunate that I've caught you," he added. "You did have a meeting with Tom, did you not?"

"Headmaster," Snape said with but a hint of his true annoyance. "It was of no moment. Just matters of internal discipline." His oath to his godson was active. The lad, as loathsome as even Severus found him, was in danger and now the Old Man wished for a talk?

"Come up to my office," Dumbledore said. "We need to have a brief chat."

Of course the old fool would pick now! "Headmaster, it is the holiday still and I do have obligations beyond this school that occasionally require my attention."

"Surely Tom has not summoned you at this time?" Dumbledore asked.

"No Sir..."

"Then nothing is pressing. To my office," Dumbledore said dismissively. Snape wanted to do anything but have a sit down with the Old Man. But to ignore this request would raise questions and as he had no idea what Rookwood would do or when, he could see no way out of this. He soon found himself in the Old Man's office standing before the large desk upon which rested a ring he had never seen before.

"May I inquire as to the nature of this thing?" Snape asked indicating the ring.

"Just a bauble I picked up," Dumbledore said. "I suspected it was of more importance. I was mistaken. Have a seat, Severus."



Snape nodded and sat in a chair facing the Headmaster's desk truly loathing the situation.

"I would offer you a lemon drop but I know you do not partake," Dumbledore commented. "I have asked you here on a matter that concerns both you as Head of Slytherin House and as a member of the Order. First off, you will be pleased to learn that I have managed to fill the posts vacated these past few weeks. As we discussed earlier, you will be taking over the post as Professor of Defense Against the Dark Arts. You will be pleased to learn I have managed to convince Horace Slughorn to return as our Potions Master and Professor which should relieve you of the duty of preparing potions for our Hospital Wing."

Snape almost smiled at that. Although he was certain that "convince" was not the appropriate word regarding his former Potions Professor. Slughorn was every bit as paranoid as Mad-eye Moody. "Coerced" would be a better word. "Blackmailed" or "Cursed" might also be more applicable.

"But I did not ask you here to discuss my staffing problems - although you should be told that they have been resolved to my satisfaction. No. My real concern as always has been the Greater Good. In that vein, I sought to control the destiny of Harry Potter - heir to a House which has opposed the Vision of my line for a thousand years and more.

"The plan, which manifested itself when his parents died, was simple. I gain control of the boy and through me his heir. It was the heir I was most concerned about. The boy could not be counted upon to honor The Way. I needed a child, one of an Ancient House, to designate as my true heir and a child raised from inception to honor The Way, be the true Heir of the dreams of my ancestors and rule over the Greater Good. Alas, my plans are for naught. Harry was not meant to be my Heir. It was to be his son. As an orphan I could control him and then seen to it he was raised to his birthright. Disposing of the father would have been easy, justifiable in the end. But now I find the justification seriously lacking," Dumbledore said pointing at the ring on his desk, "and the controllable father of my heir - the victorious martyr of our world - beyond my reach and certainly beyond my control and plans.

It is unfortunate. My heir will still have to deal with the opposition of House Potter. The Greater Good demands that Potter be politically eliminated after all. A son born to rule can see to it. This is where you come in, Severus."

"Me?" Snape replied in shock.

"Relax. The magic of House Dumbledore requires either a blood heir or an heir at law designated from another Ancient and Noble House. My brother Albeforth was to supply that heir originally. He did, but his line but for himself was eliminated in the last war and he is unwilling to consider another mate. You, of course, are not from an Ancient and Noble Line such that my House Magic cannot ever consider you an heir. But you can supply me with what I need."

"And what would that be?" Severus asked.

"A mate," Dumbledore said. "Your House's regard for their witches is not unknown to me obviously. I wish for you to provide me with three of your House witches. They must be of breeding age, Purebloods, and not otherwise bound by betrothal or House Protection. I would prefer they be unsullied..."

"Headmaster, given your positions and all, would it not be easier to seek a wife?"

"Wives expect too much and far more than I am willing to offer. You know my predilections are not directed towards females. For the Greater Good I believe I can manage to copulate with one but beyond that I have little interest in them aside from what talents they have that can be used for The Cause. The girl or girls in question will be managed. They will have no memory of our tryst nor, should it come to pass, the consequence. I have secured a Healer dedicated to the Greater Good who shall see to those details. I wish to breed an heir, not have to deal with the attentions a wife would want. The right charms and potions and this can be done before the school year is out."

"And what of the child itself?" Severus asked. "What if it should be a daughter?"

"Three breeding females should ensure a son," Dumbledore said. "Should that fail, another three will be necessary. The son and heir will be raised by one dedicated to the Greater Good and a House long allied with my own."

"And any daughters?" Severus asked.

"That is the reason for our Foundling Homes, is it not? True they shall one day be sold off as Concubines, but that is the nature of things, is it not? See to it, Severus. I want three mates to report to the new Resident Healer not later than September 2nd, the first day of classes, for preparation and examination."

"Why do you seek those who are unsullied as you put it?"

"They will be relieved of any protections from procreation," Dumbledore said. "I cannot let them conceive a child by another until after they have borne a child for the Greater Good. See to it, Severus."

Snape knew he had been dismissed. It was bad enough to supply the man with polyjuiced whores, he thought. This was another matter altogether. But he had taken an unbreakable vow and this request did not conflict with any of his other vows. The bastard would get his breeding stock. Snape left almost immediately without any parting salutation. If Dumbledore's delay cost him his Godson, his promise would be an empty one as his violation of the oath would render him as dead as the one person he ever had feelings for.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1996 - Parkinson Manor near Nottingham, U.K.

"CRUCIO!" the voice called out again. The black robed figure with the white, skull like mask had turned his wand on another victim as Pansy screamed in agony. Draco could only sit there and watch for he was magically pinned to his seat as they all were. When the Death Eater had entered their dining room after somehow managing to get through the wards without tripping the alarms and killing the House Elf, Draco had briefly thought he was to be recruited into the Dark

Lord's ranks. For the last few months he had been stuck here in this hovel, as he thought of it. He was trapped by that damnable vow he took the day he arrived.

But whatever hope he had about finally becoming what he always had wanted to be ended with the first wave of the man's wand. For several minutes Draco had been subjected to the Torture Curse and, in sequence, Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson had followed. Now Pansy was screaming in agony. All this time, the Death Eater had said nothing, not even why he was here although by now it was pretty obvious even to Draco that this was not a social call. The man had come here to kill them. Draco could understand why the Dark Lord might want to kill Lord Parkinson given that the man was clearly a closet Blood Traitor. It was his misfortune he happened to be here. He was going to die by association.

The curse stopped. Pansy sat there still pinned to her chair panting and crying at the same time. The mask turned and faced Draco.

"Now that the initial introductions have been made," a voice behind the mask said, "the Dark Lord wishes it known why you displease him. There sit's the reason for his displeasure," the voice said pointing at Draco. Draco was shocked. "House Malfoy has betrayed the Dark Lord and our glorious cause for the last time. The Dark Lord has decided it is a line of no further value to the Wizarding World and has ordered the line terminated. It is most unfortunate you chose to associate with this treacherous animal for as you all are probably aware, the Dark Lord does consider guilt by association. Say goodbye to the line of Malfoy!"

The wand pointed at Draco and he heard the dreaded words.

"AVADA KADAVRA!"

The Death Eater fell to the floor. Draco looked up and saw Snape standing there. "Professor?" he asked.

"I regret I was detained," Snape said. "But at least this demonstration has made it easier for me to convince you that the Dark Lord wants you dead."

"Why? My father..."

"Led a raid against a group of kids that cost us eleven Death Eaters. That alone would invoke the Dark Lord's wrath. He is not tolerant of failure. But that might have spared you if that was all that House Malfoy had done wrong. But in convincing the Dark Lord that you were somehow destined to be the next Lord Black, he set us up to lose millions. That oversight cannot be forgiven and as the Dark Lord can't get to your father in Azkaban to kill him nor do we know of the location of your mother, that leaves you. Every Death Eater knows you are to be killed and soon every young person hopeful of one day taking the Mark will know as well."

"What the bloody hell is going on?" Thaddeus Parkinson asked. "How the bloody hell did you get through our wards?"

"As to your first question," Snape replied, "I think that should be rather obvious and I think I made the specifics clear. The Dark Lord has marked House Malfoy for death and this was to have been the messenger," he added kicking the corpse on the floor. "As to your second question, I would ask him as he somehow opened the wards without raising any alarm, but he does not seem to talkative at the moment."

"And how did you..." Mr. Parkinson began.

"His access point was fairly obvious, at least from the outside. But all of this is academic, is it not? I think he made the point I came here to stress to my Godson - and to you all. Leave. If this house is all you have, leave! Rookwood here has been dealt with, but Draco and the lot of you are now on the Dark Lord's Death List. You stay in Britain at your peril!"

"We should never have taken the little bastard in," Anastasia Parkinson said.

"Then I'll just kill the little bastard and be done with it," Thaddeus began until he saw a wand pointed at him.

"You forget, Thaddeus," Snape said. "I am a Death Eater as well. The only reason Draco lives for now it because as his Godfather I am bound to see to it that he does. But that bond does not extend to you!"

Draco made the mistake of chuckling only to see the wand pointed at him and hear: "CRUCIO!"

For several seconds, Draco screamed in pain not understanding what was happening. When the curse lifted, he saw his Godfather smirking at him.

"As your Godfather, while I am sworn to protect you, I can still punish you for your insolence. You, Draco, are dead. If it were not for the oath I took for your mother years ago, had Rookwood not killed you, I would correct his omission and you'd be dead beneath the Dark Mark. I cannot hope to protect you here. Hogwarts is not safe for you and I have no safe house for you either. Were you to return to Slytherin, it is a fair bet one of your 'friends' would used the opportunity to earn his or her mark by slitting your throat. You're only hope to live to see your seventeenth birthday, much less any beyond, lies with these people.

"I suggest you either find a safe house, one which no one else as even heard rumor of, or you leave this country altogether. As Draco is betrothed to your daughter, you are stuck with him. But I would also suggest that if you leave, you can forget about Charenwell. You won't make it past their wards alive." And with that Snape left.

"You little shit!" Thaddeus said just before beating Draco senseless. Unfortunately, he had to refrain from actually killing the boy. There was the betrothal contract that was almost as binding upon him as the Godfather thing was on that rapine, Death Eater bastard. He had no real choice but to take the bloodied useless whelp with him and his family to a safe place he had long before prepared...

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Harry had arrived back at the Manor, still knowing he had heard of Horcruxes somewhere and seen that cup as well. He called for a

"family" meeting following their dinner and asked Bill and Fleur to be there as well. He described in some detail what had transpired at Gringotts and produced the two items of Shakash. Once the cup appeared, he heard a few gasps and noticed as an elf was called, who produced an almost identical cup, at least in outward appearance.

"What's this?" Harry asked.

"Bill delivered it to us about a month ago," Hermione said.

"Okay," Harry said. "So we discussed these Horcrux things before."

"We did, Harry," Hermione replied. "We came up with a theory, on which for now has been no certain proof. But here we may have the proof."

"I've been through so much over the last months," Harry sighed. "Keep it simple. Pictures would work as well."

"This," Bill said indicating the cup that the elves had just recently provided, "it a forgery taken from the Lestrangle vault and said to have been the prized possession of one Madam Smith, killed in 1946. It was turned over to us as an item of interest but of no particular value about a month ago.

"This," Bill added indicating the new cup, "we got today. It's an item of Shakash that the Goblins said had been recovered by them centuries ago or so. It was also said to come from the Lestrangle vault."

"Duplicates?" Hermione asked.

"A forgery and the original," Bill replied.

"But why didn't the Goblins hand this one over back then?" Harry asked.

"It's Shakash," Bill shrugged. "My guess is that they knew this when they had recovered it and when they found it in the Lestrangle vault, it caused questions. My guess is, and it's an educated one, the Goblins

found these two cups and saw them for what they were and realized one of them - the Shakash Cup - was supposed to have been in their inventory and not that vault. They turned over the forgery to us, but kept this one pending further investigation. I would not be the least surprised if a Goblin is now being or has recently been fed to their dragons for theft.

"My guess is - again an educated one - that Voldemort sought the original. Finding a fake when he murdered and robbed the Smith woman, he managed to make contact with a ... pliable ... Goblin who turned over the original. It is the Shakash cup that bears the Horcrux taint and not the fake. The Goblins held off pending their investigation into the theft of the original."

"And they turned over the second to us?" Harry began.

"An act of good faith on their part. I believe they mean to ask something of you, Harry, something they deem big and I don't mean money. They're trying to get in your good graces."

"Should I be concerned about that?" Harry asked.

Bill shrugged. "I can't say, Harry. My guess is what they might ask for is - well, it's not something that will lose you anything really. But for them, they need whatever it is. You might say yes to their request today, but they're not taking that chance. It's not good business for them, whatever it is."

Harry shrugged. "Getting back to these things," he said.

"The fake cup is nothing more than a fake cup," Bill said. "The Goblins obviously could care less about it. The two Shakash items, however ... I guess they thought we could make more sense over these former Horcuxes than they could."

"It fits our theory," Hermione began.

"Remind me," Harry said slightly annoyed. "Or do you forget I've had about three days for you one and have had more stuff stuffed into my head than in all my years of school combined since we arrived here."



"Harry, it's about the connection you used to have with Voldemort. We figured out he had made horcruxes, as in more than one. It fit the evidence and our research. The Diary was obviously one and when he still managed to come back it was safe to say it was not the only one. You had a connection to him and then it was gone. It was gone following our bonding. Our Coven Bond was combined with an ancient purification ritual, although I didn't know that at the time. I was a little caught up in the moment and thought it romantic and not about the other implications or ... possibilities. When the two combined, there was an obvious magical backlash. I suspected...

"Our research has told us that a Horcrux is hate based magic. The two rituals that were combined on our bonding were very powerful love based magics. I won't say your scar was a horcrux. To be honest, our research tends to negate that theory. But it may have been a part of Voldemort's soul that somehow severed from his main soul and affixed to you that night when you defeated him as a baby. If it was a true horcrux, it would have most likely taken possession of you and the proof that it did not is that you were the Potter and Black rings which would not have recognized you as the heir if you had been possessed. But, we know the scar was some kind of link to Voldemort even before he regained a physical form. If that link was somehow connected with his soul and if that link was suddenly overpowered by love based magic - such as when we bonded, in theory it could have overpowered the hate based magics of anything connected to that link - as in the other soul containers!

"There was no proof that this had occurred. Nothing in our resources ever reported such an occurrence. It was merely theoretically possible and the reports of his snake disappearing and his three week coma suggested something like that might have occurred, but without something that could be verified as a horcrux to test, it was just a theory. Now, thanks to the Goblins, we have two objects that were once Horcruxes and were not destroyed by conventional means. They fit the theory!"

"What does that mean?" Harry asked.

"The love magic backlash from our bonding overpowered the magic protecting the soul fragments in these two horcruxes and most likely any others he had as well. His anchors are gone, Harry. He's mortal."

Harry nodded. "And yet he's never really stuck his neck out for a Headsman to take. The closest he came to doing that was when he came after me the first time and killed my parents. It's good to know that this time if we put him down he will stay down forever, but it really changes nothing as far as our immediate plans are concerned, does it?"

"Harry, I...", Hermione began sounding disappointed.

"I'm sorry if I sounded a little short with you," Harry said. "I know your excited about this information. But the truth is as valuable as it is, there's nothing we can really do with it right now. It's not like he's going to send me an engraved invitation for us to take him out. Even if he were so bold, you can bet he'd show up with every Death Eater he could muster. I wouldn't mind at all if he did that, but only if he did that when we're ready for all of them. Until then, we keep this information but we move forward as planned."

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23rd, 1996 - Potter Manor, Charenwell.

Until a couple of days ago, Cyril Underhill did not exist except on paper. He had records at Government House including a Birth Certificate stating he was a magical born in Britain on March 30, 1960 and that he attended school there. There was also a residency certification stating he had legally emigrated to Charenwell in 1978 and attained a permanent resident status later that year. He had a Charenwell magical passport that would show he traveled extensively and his tax records indicated that he earned most of his living from overseas interests. In May, a two bedroom flat was rented under his name at 227 Donner St. in Pottersport. An elf named Desie was hired to keep the flat in order. All of this was paid for from an account at Gringotts Pottersport than had been opened only days before. Mr. Underhill also acquired a Charenwell driving license and purchased and registered a late model Lada which was garaged nearby. If anyone involved in these transactions was asked, none would be able to say they met the man.

The man behind the name first appeared two days ago arriving via International Floo from France. He withdrew two thousand Pounds from his Gringotts account, went to the market to purchase groceries and then headed towards his flat. Records would indicate - if checked - that he then made a call from his flat to Government House. Even though the phone had been in place since May, no other calls had ever been made from that phone before. The call was to the Lord Mayor's direct line and lasted a little more than one minute. The Lord Mayor's office would call him back the next morning in another call lasting about one minute.

The man behind the name had been to Charenwell before. He was British born as his false records stated. The real man had acquired his residency certificate in 1976 not 1978 and had maintained an address at 12 Estate, West Farm from 1979 until only recently probably. The real man wondered what had become of his Aston-Martin. He wished he had been able to keep that car because the Lada was so not him. But the Lada had the advantage of being non-descript. There were loads of them in Charenwell along with Fiats, the British made Minis and other small cars. Charenwell had not been designed for the automobile and most people would not want that to change. A small car could navigate the narrow streets in the towns and cities. Larger vehicles had to stick to the main roads.

After a very nice lunch at one of the Pottersport restaurants where thankfully he was not recognized "Cyril Underhill" got into his small, Russian made car and headed off for an appointment. Climbing the hill out of Pottersport further made him miss his Aston-Martin as the little Russian car seemed to struggle. But he was soon on the road heading east, past Government House and towards Potter's Vineyard and beyond. He arrived at his destination somewhat in shock. Some things he had not truly noticed in his last two days in Pottersport now commanded his attention. He had seen posters in Pottersport about recruiting but though nothing much of them until his car seemed to be "buzzed" by a few flights of Tiger Moth planes. He had seen them before, just not in those numbers. And then there was his destination itself. He had been there before years ago, but he would certainly have remembered the additional huge buildings and the dragons and hippogriffs and yet there were scores of people there who seemed

unconcerned. There was actually a young woman showing them the two dragons that seemed to be lazing about.

He had tried to park in front of the large building he thought he was going to for this meeting, but was met by an elf who directed him to a car park not far away - one which he knew had not been there before. From there, he had been instructed to enter the large door on the side of what he knew was a new building. He did as he was told, still confused by what he had seen and found himself in what looked like a reception area. A young lady with red hair whom he did not recognize was seated at some kind of fancy counter or desk and looked like she was busy reading a book or something. He walked up trying to act calm.

"Excuse me," he said. The young woman looked up. "Are you aware there're dragons out there?"

She nodded. "They like it here and leave us alone," she said as if having dragons about was normal. "May I help you?" she asked in an accent "Cyril" knew was foreign. She sounded...

"Irish?" he asked, his voice betraying his surprise and confusion.

"What self-respecting person from abroad wouldn't be?" she asked. "And you are?"

"Cyril Underhill, and I have an appointment."

"Indeed you do," the young woman said. "And you're early, aren't you? The Duke is still meeting with the Irish delegation and should be available when he's through."

"An Irish girl in Charenwell?"

The young, red head almost glared at him. "It]f you're trying to chat me up or whatever you Brits call it, I'll have you know I am married. That and you're obviously English and far too old for my tastes. Have a seat." She had dismissed him.

"Irish delegation?" he asked not long after taking his seat.

"It's been in the papers," she replied dismissively.

There was a magazine on the table, but "Cyril" only feigned interest. Several minutes seemed to pass before the red-haired young woman seemed to take any interest in anything aside from whatever she was reading. She then picked up the telephone and seemed to punch in a number.

"A Mr. Cyril Underhill is here," she said. "Yes, I've asked him to wait." The young woman put down the phone. "The meeting is concluding. Someone will be here to escort you back shortly."

"Can't you do that?"

"What? And leave this station unmanned? Let just anyone walk in and about? I think not. Patience, they say, is a virtue, Mr. Underhill."

"Ah! Mister Underhill I take it," a very English sounding voice began. Mr. Underhill looked up and saw an elegantly dressed blonde woman approaching him.

"Hello Cissy," he said. "It's been a long time."

It seemed the blood drained from the woman's face and she practically staggered backwards in shock.

"It ... it ... it c-can't be," she stuttered. "Y-you're dead!" She then seemed to gain her composure a bit as she drew her wand. "Erin? Call Security! We have an imposter!" She then turned to the man. "I don't know who you are or how you got here, but we are going to find out!"

"May I?" the man replied calmly as he reached into his jacket.

"If you even attempt to draw a wand, Sir, I'll hex you into next week!" Cissy growled.

"I was about to take a magical oath to prove the truth of what I'm about to tell you, Cissy."

Cissy looked at him skeptically. "Just remember I have you covered and one false move and you're hexed. Got it?"

The man nodded. He drew a wand and pointed it at his own chest. "I hereby swear on my life and magic that what I'm about to say is the truth to the best on my knowledge." There was a flash of magic. "I was born Sirius Orion Black on March 30th, 1960. My parents were Orion Black, then Heir to the Ancient and Noble House of Black, and his Cousin Walburga Black nee Black, your Aunt. I attended Hogwarts in Gryffindor from 1970 until 1978 and then became a Hit Wizard. In earlier November 1981, I was thrown into Azkaban without trial where I remained until I managed to release myself on my own recognizance in June 1993. I have been Head of House Black by law and magic since the death of Lord Arcturus Black in 1991 and a fugitive sought by the Ministry of Magic since my self-release from prison. By means which I'd prefer to explain later, I believe effectively was declared magically and legally dead on or immediately after a fight with Death Eaters in the Department of Mysteries on or about June 15th, 1996 when I was hit with a Stunner while dueling with your sister Bellatrix and fell through the Veil. I am now known as Cyril Underhill - which I will explain later - and have also been known as 'Siri,' 'Padfoot' and 'Snuffles.' Lumos!" His wand glowed brightly and then he returned it to where it had been before.

Cissy lowered her wand and looked at him, her mouth opening and closing as if she intended to say something but then changed her mind. She walked towards the man, now standing and who had a few inches on her in height and from his point of view, her eyes went through several emotions as she approached. Once she got close, those pale blue eyes he had not seen in almost twenty years narrowed almost dangerously.

SMACK! Her had came from seemingly nowhere and cuffed his cheek ... hard and painfully.

"What the bloody hell," he began.

SMACK! She slapped him again.

"That's for getting yourself locked away so you could not keep your promise to me! Fifteen years, Siri! Fifteen years in a hell you could've prevented."

"I wasn't Lord Black then..." SMACK!

"You would've been had you not gone to prison! You would've been in '91 when Lord Arcutus died! And even when he was still alive, you were the only one who could've convinced him to release me from that bastard! You left me to rot!"

SMACK!

"OW! Stop it," the man protested. "What's that for?"

"That's for getting yourself dead!"

SMACK!

"And that's for not being dead. Do you have any idea how much pain you've caused?"

SMACK!

"Bloody hell, woman!" he protested.

"That's ... that's ... well, I'm sure it's justified for some reason, you prat! You think this was all some kind of prank?"

"Actually..."

SMACK!

"You bastard!" Cissy yelled.

"Bloody hell! Well, any doubt I had about being dead is gone. I heard it said that pain proves you're alive."

SMACK!

"A reminder!" Cissy all but shrieked. "Erin?" she asked in a much calmer voice. "You can call off the Guards. Full 'Families' list is in order I should think - maybe include all tonight's guests. Make the calls. I'm taking this ... joker ... to the Briefing Room where he will explain all this to everyone!"

"Yes, Cissy," the red-haired girl replied.

"YOU!," Cissy growled looking at the man. "You are coming with me!" She grabbed him by the ear and ...

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Bloody Hell, woman! Now I know I can't be dead! Ow!" he protested as she led him away.

The man who had called himself "Mr. Underhill" soon found himself in a huge room with a large, horseshoe like table dominating the floor and behind and to either side of the table rose additional seats. He did not bother to count the seats either at the table or behind it. A small table with a chair had been placed just beyond the top of the horseshoe and he was told to sit there. After Cissy left, an elf arrived and offered him the choice of a glass of water or cup of tea. He opted for the tea.

"What is this place?" he asked the elf for it reminded him slightly of the courtrooms back in Britain.

"The main Briefing Room, Sir," the elf replied and then left without further elaboration. "Mistress Cissy believes this - er - revelation requires the participation of the Families and, given that there are many others here and about for this weekend's events, the other guests who are here for various functions have also been asked to attend. The Duke is in agreement and so it has been done. You are asked to stand to the side of the table once the people begin to gather."

"Why?"

"Mistress Cissy is certain there will be some who wish to speak to you and others who wish to slap your face before you have a chance to explain yourself. Enjoy your tea. The first arrivals will be in about



fifteen minutes." With that the elf disappeared. To Cyril or Sirius he looked at the cup of tea and felt it was not exactly what he wanted for his last meal.

Just moments after the elf had left him to his tea, he heard a familiar sound, that of a heavy, wooden staff striking the floor followed by a metallic sound in an alternating rhythm. He looked up and saw three people standing before with, two with wands drawn. One was a lady he remembered from years earlier and he was surprised to see her here. The other with wand drawn was a scarred man who was missing an eye and part of his nose and seemed to be glaring at him with both his remaining eye and the oversized and what "Cyril" always considered the especially creepy magical one. Next to the two stood a tall, black man who looked at him with some interest.

"Well?" the black man asked, although it was clear the question was not directed at "Cyril."

"I find no sign of any potions or enchantments," the woman said.

"Aye," the disfigured man growled. "It's 'im alright. Though don't ask me how it can be. I saw 'im pass into the Veil that night."

"It will be very interesting to learn how you extricated yourself this time, Black," the tall Black man said.

"Aye," the other agreed. "Probably even more spectacular than getting passed the idiot guards at Azkaban," the other replied. "Poppy, you can inform His Highness that this miscreant is who he claimed to be, although we can't say how this is so." Madam Pomfrey nodded and then turned and left.

"What," "Cyril said in mock surprise, "not gonna force out of me, Mad-eye? And it's good to see you too, for the record. And you too, Kingsley."

"Nope," Mad-eye replied. "We're just here for the food later on. Although this might prove entertaining." With that, Mad-eye stumped off to find a seat somewhere up in the gallery.

"As interested as I am in learning how you managed to die and yet not die, Black," the remaining man said, "I think it's going to be more amusing to see your reaction to all the mess you've caused."

"Cyril" nodded and watched as Kingsley Shacklebolt, the man who had headed the manhunt for the infamous criminal and fugitive Sirius Black for three years without "success" - although the man had known where Black was for at least two of those years - left and joined his old mentor in the Gallery as several others began entering and filling the back seats. "Cyril" did not recognize any of the new arrivals at first, although one dark haired lady who took her seat seemed familiar to him. Then again, he had not seen the woman in well over twenty years. It was Cissy's sister Andromeda who he had last seen before she bonded with her husband Ted which was before his Third Year at Hogwarts.

Well over one hundred people were now seated in the back rows of the gallery when an elf popped into view between "Cyril" and the horseshoe shaped table.

"Mr. George Weasley, his Wife and Consort Lady Angelina and the Ladies of the Coven of his house," the elf began before listing several other names. "Cyril" watched as "Lady" after "Lady" was called and followed the red haired young man into the Gallery. "Cyril" was shocked and confused by the term "Coven." He had been raised to believe such things were Dark Magic and knew personally - or once had known - the George Weasley and doubted that the amusing lad would delve in such arts. Then again, the mother was not beneath such things. What was more confusing was there was applause as each name was announced and in some cases loud clapping and cheers from at least a small segment of those who had already taken their seats. All told there were sixteen young women who followed the young man into the room.

"Mr. Frederick Weasley, his Wife and Consort Lady Alicia and the Ladies of the Coven of his House..." Another sixteen young women entered behind Fred.

"Mr. Charles Weasley, his Wife and Consort Lady Tatiana and the Ladies of the Coven of his House..." Ten women entered with Charlie.

"Mr. William Weasley, his Wife and Consort Lady Fleur and the Ladies of the Coven of his House..." Including Fleur whom "Cyril" had known before, sixteen young women followed Bill into the room and took their seats.

That was even more of a shock to "Cyril," although perhaps it explained things a little.

"Mr. Arthur Weasley and the Ladies of the Coven of his House..." Nine women were introduced and not one of them was the man's daughter or his wife Molly.

"Mr. Frank Longbottom, his Wife and Consort Alice and the Ladies of the Coven of the Lesser House of Longbottom..." "Cyril" never heard the names. Frank and Alice had been friends of his years ago, but he had not seen them since before the birth of their son in 1980. While he had wasted away in prison, he latter learned his friends had been driven insane by his own cousin and spent their days in bed in St. Mungo's staring at the ceiling and drooling on themselves. This couple, while much older, looked quite healthy. "Cyril" was stunned. In addition from their own rising from the dead, as it were, these two had also formed a Coven. They would never have gone Dark!

"The Ladies of the Coven of House Lupin," the elf announced and then proceeded to name them. Moony? "Cyril" thought. He's gone dark as well? And where the bloody hell is he? Did he have a Consort?

"The Ladies of the Coven of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom..." the elf announced as the largest group of young women so far entered as their names were called. For "Cyril," the confusion only grew as he would have thought that Frank was now the Head of that House but that was obviously not the case. Again no Consort was announced.

"The Ladies of the Coven of the Ancient and Noble House of Black," the elf announced.

'Bloody Hell! Not Harry too!' "Cyril thought.

"Lady Cathy," the elf said and a very young looking girl entered "Cyril's" view and took a seat now at the main table, closest to him to his right. "Lady Laura," the elf continued and another very young woman took her seat next to whoever this Cathy was. "Lady Kathryn," and the process continued.

"Lady Narcissa..." "Cyril's" jaw dropped when he saw Cissy, his Cousin and who he knew had been married to a known Death Eater take her seat next to "Kathryn." The woman had slapped him silly earlier and now she was part of - of this dark magic?

"Lady Parvati, Attendant to the Countess of Darby..." What the bloody hell was that nonsense? "Cyril" was now very confused.

"Lady Constance, ... Lady Fiona, ... Lady Karen, ... Lady Tabatha, ... Lady Daphne, Attendant to the Duchess of Charenwell, ... Lady Dame Nymphadora, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire, ..."

'Okay,' "Cyril" thought, 'this has seriously taken a turn for the surreal.' He knew who Dora was but had no idea about those titles or whatever they were.

"...And Lady, Doctor/Healer Mallory, Matron of House Black!" And this was followed by a huge ovation from the others in the room. "Cyril" saw she who had been the love of his life, acknowledge the applause and take her seat - and then glare at him. He had, of course, no way of knowing that most of the people in the room were or would be her patients.

"Mademoiselle, Gabrielle Delacour, Betrothed to the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter," the elf continued. "Cyril's" shock continued as a young girl, to his mind no more than nine or ten, entered and waived to the crowd - to some eager cheers from some of the other young - very young - women and take her seat to his left at the table across from that 'Cathy' girl.

"The Ladies Coven of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter," the elf continued. "Lady Eleanor, ... Lady Erin, ..." and "Cyril" saw the red-

head he saw earlier take her seat. "Lady Sally-Anne, ... Lady Padma, Attendant to the Countess of Darby," as an exotic looking, dark skinned young woman entered who was the spitting image - aside from her dress - of one of the Black "Ladies." "Lady Katie," the elf continued. "Ladie Laura, ... Lady Rhonda, ... Lady Dame Ginevra, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire," he continued and "Cyril" was now at a loss for he knew who she really was - she was the young witch they were supposed to have kept Harry away from. "Lady Stacey, ... Lady Astoria, Attendant to the Duchess of Charenwell, ... and Lady Minerva, ..." there was a huge cheer as this name was called, "... Director of the Charenwell Educational Development Board and Matron of House Potter!" "Cyril's" jaw dropped seeing Professor McGonagall enter and take her seat. There was no way that Professor McGonagall would have been a part of any of this, was there? He thought.

"ALL RISE!" the elf said and with that everyone stood up and "Cyril" felt it best to do the same.

"His Excellency, Sir Stephen Blaire, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Ambassador to Charenwell from the Court of St. James and his Wife and Consort Lady Abigail.

"His Excellency, Monsieur Phillipe Delecour, Deputy Minister for Magic of France and his Wife and Consort Madam Apolline...

"His Excellency, Sir Remus John Lupin, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire, Lord Mayor of Charenwell and his Wife and Consort Lady Stephanie..." "Cyril" watched as they took their seats confused.

"His Grace, Lord Sir Neville Longbottom, Thirty-first Earl of Pendle, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Longbottom, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire and his Wife and Consort, Her Grace, Lady Susan of the Ancient and Noble House of Bones." Raised in the ancient societal traditions, "Cyril" knew that the Lord of House Longbottom was now married to the last of another Ancient and Noble House - a powerful political union back in Britain. But he also knew this Lord had a "Coven" which was

something that still made no sense to him as he could not fathom so many men from "Light" lines or dispositions going dark like this.

"Her Grace, Lady, Dame Luna, Countess of Darby, Consort of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire!"

"Cyril" watched as the young, blonde woman with large eyes approached him, the first to do so since Mad-eye and the others. She looked at him for a moment and then smiled.

"My father was wrong," she said. "You're not Stubby Boardman," she added before doing a surprisingly unladylike skip off to her seat. It left "Cyril" speechless which he would later believe may have been the point.

"Her Highness," the elf continued, "Lady Dame Hermione, Duchess of Charenwell, Consort of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire." The young woman "Cyril" saw looked nothing like he remembered. She was breathtaking.

"His Highness, Lord Sir Harry the First, Duke of Charenwell, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black, Royal Order of the Knights of the Round Table, Order of the British Empire! God Save the Queen!"

"God Save the Queen!" it seemed everyone else said as Harry entered. He took his seat and the room became very quiet as he stared at "Cyril."

"Y-you have a lot of explaining to do...", "Cyril" began.

"You first Cyril Underhill," Harry said. "Or is it really Sirius Orion Black?"

"I was born that." "Cyril" replied. "And died that, apparently. But at least I did not die DARK!"

"Are you saying I've gone dark?" Harry asked.

"You have a Coven! It's well known...!"

"How ignorant British Magicals are," Harry finished. "When you are aware of all the facts, you will realize the truth. I am Dark, as you say, because I accept a relationship with witches as equals and without regard to blood status - the antithesis of Pureblood Elite thinking which has dominated and polluted Britain for far too long. Learn the truth before becoming critical of it, Sirius!"

"That being said, why should I not believe you have not gone Dark? It takes a Dark Lord to cheat death and you don't look dead now," Harry said with some bitterness in his voice.

"Didn't know for sure until Cousin Cissy smacked me around," "Cyril" replied. "I'm now quite sure I'm alive although not sure whether to consider myself lucky," a comment that elicited chuckles of one form or another from around the room. "You've got some explaining to do, Harry..."

"My House, my rules, you first Sirius!," Harry shot back. "You're supposed to be dead! And yet here you are now, alive and well. It's been confirmed. You died! Did you have a horcrux?"

"How do you know about..." Sirius began.

"Not relevant," Harry retorted. "Answer the question!"

"No. I know what those are and would never have had one."

"And yet you now live when you're known to have died! Only Voldemort's done that!"

"Did you actually see me die?" Sirius asked wryly.

"I saw you pass through the Veil and disappear!" Harry shot back.

"Of that I have no doubt. But the question remains, did you actually see me die? Did you see the life leave my eyes? Did you see me breathe my last and then no more?"

"Um ... well no, not really."

"Dora?" Sirius asked.

"No. Then again I was a little busy at the time," she replied with a disbelieving huff. "I did see you fall through, though."

"Mad-eye? Shack? Moony?" Sirius asked.

"Bit busy at the time," Mad-eye said. Kinglsey said the same thing.

"I saw you pass through," Remus added.

Sirius nodded. "Yet the proof - or a proof, lies here. You three have seen death as has Harry but, unless I'm mistaken, Cousin Dora has not. So let me ask you this then, Dora: Have you been to Hogwarts since that night?"

"Of course. I was there for security reasons and to attend a couple of Order meetings."

"And how did you go there?"

"For the Order meetings by floo. But as an Auror, I had to go to Hogsmeade and either walk or take one of the carriages."

"And did you take the carriage?"

"Yes. What's the point?"

"Did you see what was pulling the carriages?" Sirius asked. Harry seemed to gasp.

"Nothing pulls the carriages," Dora said.

"Thestrals!" Harry said.

"Precisely," Sirius agreed. "Dora can't see the thestrals that pull the carriages hence she didn't see me die."



"But the Ministry Hall of Records shows that you're dead," Dora protested.

"And there's the matter of your Will," Cissy added. "The Goblins would never have published it unless you were dead."

"And there's Mallory and Dora," Hermione added. "Mallory's bond with you could only be broken upon death. She was a love bonded concubine. And you never sold Dora, so again the only way for that bond to be broken - the only way they could have later bonded with Harry was if you were dead. Then there's the fact that Harry wears the Black House Ring! Only the true Head of House can wear it - the magic prevents any other from doing so and the only way Harry could be the true Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Black is if he were so designated by his predecessor and his predecessor had died."

"You are mostly correct," Sirius agreed. "Although in theory I could have abdicated my position as Head of House in favor of Harry. But since I did not, the only way for that to have happened was if I was dead in the eyes of magic, the law and Gringotts. And yet, here I am. It is a bit of a puzzle isn't it? Especially when you consider that you can't fake the magic that would show those who needed proof that I was dead." There was, however, a mischievous look on the man's face.

"So you had this all planned from the start!" Hermione said.

"My death?" Sirius asked. "Not from the start. Not at all. But the more I learned of what Dumbledore was up to, the more I realized... One way or another, Harry, the only way for our plan to truly succeed so that you could achieve your birthright and your sister could be saved ... you did find my Goddaughter, didn't you?"

"I did," Harry said. "By accident, really. It was about a week after I go here when I spent an afternoon with the only father she's ever known, Mick Jameson of Pottersport, Captain of a fishing boat and a good friend now."

"She was here this whole time?" Sirius asked. "We were looking all over Britain for her!"

"She was here since she was a few months old," Harry said. "And she's here in this room - in the back benches with the only family she's ever truly known and it's a wonderful family - even if her Dad's gone months at a time fishing."

Sirius seemed to sob slightly. "Th-then it's by accident I did what I promised your parents, Harry. I kept the two of you safe, but by accident!"

"When Bill told me what his mother and Dumbledore had planned for you, when we learned what Dumbledore wanted to do - to kill you after you had a son and to sell Clarice off as a slave to end your line in favor of his ... we had to save you, don't you see? I'm your magical Godfather after all. I had to save your lives or die trying! It's the nature of the oath I took when you were born and later when Clarice was born. When I left Azkaban - on my own recognizance, I should add just as it now seems the news of my untimely demise was in itself untimely - when I escaped, I did so to find you, Harry, at first 'cause you were in the greatest danger. But I had to find Clarice as well to see to it that she was safe as well. Mallory and I were looking for her from as soon as we got back together here not long after I escaped. You, Harry, were after all easy for me to find. Later, after you and Hermione saved my life and in so doing convinced Remus I was on the level, he and Dora and later Stephanie joined our little crusade to help you and your sister. Shack and Mad-eye joined us after the Tri-wizard for their own reasons. Neither of them trusted Dumbledore to do what was truly right or the Ministry to do anything. For a while, the lot of us thought it would be so simple: just get you here and all would be right with the world. But then Bill and Fleur joined us and told us about Dumbledore's plans for you - to kill you and keep your heir as his own! We soon learned he planned to sell your sister off as a slave - and Hermione as well, while you were to be potioned up to accept whatever mate Dumbledore selected for you, a mate who in time was equally expendable. You've bonded with Ginny I see."

"She was not at fault," Harry replied sharply. "No one knew about that aside from her mother and maybe her brother Ron who - as you might have observed - is not here!"

"We never would have supported that nonsense," Fred said.

"Our sister's no slave!" George added. "Our so called mother would have her one, but we will not! She may have begun here as Harry's Concubine, but she's never been treated as his slave and will never be!"

"Let's get back to the point," Harry said after Ginny thanked her brothers very publicly. "Why are you here?"

"I had to die to set you free, Harry. There was nothing for it. You had to be free to save those I wanted to save and those who you might want to save. I had to die, Harry."

"And yet, you're not dead. And why did you have to die?"

"You needed to be fully emancipated to protect yourself, your sister, anyone else outside of Charenwell and your estate. As your Godfather I had to find a way to save you and Clarice. But I was also obligated by magical oath to your father and Grandfather to do whatever I could to protect the Potter Estates. You own most of the land here in Charenwell, Harry, and I assume by now you know this. It's at best two thirds of your total land holdings and the rest of it's in Britain. Your British rents and business interests produce more than three fourths of your estate's income. No Potter ever lost an acre of land - not with all the Kings and wars and all of that. It's one of the reasons House Dumbledore hated your family. We had to get you away from him, period. But that would not save your lands or your sister. Getting you away - bringing you here - that was the easy part.

"Getting you here and then Moony, as Lord Mayor and Steward could declare you emancipated if I as your true magical guardian did not; but his declaration insofar as Charenwell was concerned would have enough. It would've meant nothing beyond these shores. The British Wizengamot would never have recognized it seeing as Dumbledore had usurped your House votes and as he's Chief Mugwump of the

ICW, he could've delayed your claim at least until you were seventeen..."

"He's been ousted from that position," Harry said.

Sirius nodded. "But that was after I 'died,' right?"

Harry nodded.

"Harry, much as I never wanted to, the more I learned about what Dumbledore was up to, the more I realized I had to die..."

"WHAT?" Harry shrieked.

"Harry," Sirius said in a calming voice. "There was nothing else that would work. Were I alive, you'd either be here and have lost most of your family's legacy to Dumbledore - as he had so hoped - or you would still be there in Britain and be losing everything. I could save you from that. But over two thirds of the Potter lands are in Britain and unless they recognized you as an adult those land - two thousand years of heritage - would have been confiscated and have become the property of one Albus Dumbledore. The property would have been declared forfeit if you absconded as a minor and there's no way Dumbledore - whose family as coveted your lands for a thousand years or more - would have done anything but claim it for himself which was what he wants in the first place!

"In my life and due to my status as a fugitive, Dumbledore got control of your House votes as proxy in the Wizengamot. It was enough for him to control a majority whenever he wanted to. I could not gain control of those votes or regain my own House votes so long as I was alive and either a prisoner in Azkaban or a fugitive. The Old Bastard had me by the short hairs and he knew it! I could declare you emancipated and he'd simply get the Wizengamot to overrule it. I could protest to the ICW and he'd stuff that one down as well. But...

"But if I died and declared you emancipated in my Will, it would be up to Gringotts and not the wizards to declare whether or not my intent was valid and enforceable. By Treaty, not even Dumbledore or the Wizengamot or the ICW can contest the validity of a Will unless they

had a prior, proven adjudication of my incompetence and this would include my right to declare you emancipated and therefore the true master of your estates. I was never tried, therefore, they could never contest my Will! I had to die, Harry. I had to die to free you and hopefully your sister and others as well. It was the only way to save you or your sister or anyone you wanted to save, Harry.

"I had to die, Harry. I knew that as soon as we knew what Dumbledore was up to and just how screwed we and you were! We gave the old bastard the benefit of the doubt and then Bill and Fleur told us his plan for you and Ginny - his plan to get her knocked up with your heir and then once he was born snuff the both of you! My life for yours, Harry and Ginny - and arguably Hermione. My life for yours. My death would have insured House Potter could survive. It was really a small price to pay for me. Compared to House Potter, House Black was an afterthought, although not enough of a one to leave it to my other relations, most notably the Malfoy line, but that's not important here...

"My plan was simple, Harry. I had to snuff it. I would've preferred to go down fighting, but I was willing to turn myself over to the Ministry and face the music, as it were. Ol' Fudge was itching to take me out and, in a way, that was my real plan. Had the battle at the Ministry not happened, I'd have turned myself over to the bastard to get myself snuffed so that the terms of my Will would free you. I told no one of this plan. Moony guessed it, but no one else did. I didn't tell my Mallory. I couldn't be what I wanted to be for her and it was best, I thought, to give her a chance and hope for herself. Didn't tell Dora either, similar reasons. To save you, to save them, to save everyone I cared about, you needed to be emancipated and for that to truly work I had to die.

"Not that I wanted to. Mallory, I am sorry that I chose that route and did not tell you. You too, Dora. But it was necessary. There was no way around it. Anything less and Dumbledore would have won. I would have failed in my oath to House Potter and to Harry ... and Clarice, and in a way to the two of you, not to mention protecting my own House, and failure was not an option! I would not hand over the world to a Dark Lord! That was my only option should I have chosen to not do what I knew needed to be done to break Harry free of the

bastard and prevent the bastard from getting control over House Potter and its assets. He would have been unstoppable with access to those resources. But that's not the point! He would not control the destiny of MY House - as he had been doing - or the House I was sworn to defend! He needed to be taken out of the equation and short of killing him - not a mean feat - then it was to separate the lock from the key: separate his control of Harry and Harry's House from his hands in a manner not even he could stop! So, to free Harry, to turn over to him what was rightfully his, to give him the chance to do what I thought he could do, I had to emancipate him NOW and in a way that could not be challenged by Dumbledore which meant one which Gringotts controlled.

"Now of course I did not really want to die," Sirius continued. "Not after I did a Potter with my Will..."

"A Potter?" Harry asked.

Sirius nodded. "With regards to any Will, Gringotts has sole authority particularly in regards to property and vaults. House Potter has known for some time that House Dumbledore was trying to end their line. Your Great-great grandfather Edward and fourteen daughters before he had his only son Charlus. Edward had six younger brothers or half brothers who each had nothing but daughters. They all went to Hogwarts and all before Albus showed up. But Albus's Great-grandfather was alive and Potions Master at the school. Figure the odds. Seven men had over forty daughters and only one son between them. Then there was your grandfather who attended while Albus was there. His wife Samantha had many miscarriages before finally giving birth to your father. While she was in school, Albus taught Transfiguration and is said to have been having an affair with both the then Potions Master and Healer."

"And my father and mother?"

"They attended when Professor Slughorn was Potions Master and my guess is Slughorn was straight and not about to share a bed with Dumbledore - who prefers male lovers by the way. Madam Pomfrey was the Healer. So for that time he had no ability to - er - pollute the situation.

"While your Great-grandfather was Head of House, he made a deal with the Goblins regarding his Wills. They would declare any Will of his as fraudulent and deal with any person who asked them for any adjudication of any such Will, unless the Will was executed here in Charenwell and witnessed by the Charenwell Goblins only. Your grandfather did the same thing as seeing as how Dumbledore did try and submit a different Will which he claimed was the real one - and lost his vaults in trying - the protection was prudent.

"You're father's Will only dealt with your Trust Vault which had already been set up, the disposition of his and Lily's personal possessions and your Guardianship. He did not, however, include the restriction on his Will. The lack of such restrictions seems to have been enough for Dumbledore to submit a fake will in all probability, one which gave him sole control over your Guardianship should certain others - such as myself - be unable to assume such duties. House Potter would never have allowed House Dumbledore any control over its Heirs."

"I am acutely aware of his manipulation of the Wills," Harry said. "After all, had the real will been executed, I would've been raised here in Charenwell - or by you. Either way, I would never have been under that usurper's Guardianship. Get back to the point!"

"I'm sure he did the same thing to your father, Harry," Sirius replied. "It's the only way to explain why your father's Will omitted your Charles and Samantha. He ... he forced me to sign another Will, one much different than the one which left you as Lord Black. But that was after I made the contract with Gringotts barring any will not witnessed by the Goblins. The Will he made me sign - I signed it back in March of '96 - turned over the bulk of the Black assets to him and made it certain that he was to be your Guardian. What little was left which included the title of Lord Black and the Black seats in the Wizengamot was to pass to Draco Malfoy."

"That explains things," Cissy said. "When Draco came home for the Spring Holiday he met with his father and afterwards began strutting around like he owned the place claiming he was designated as the next Lord Black if you passed on."

Sirius nodded. "That will wasn't worth the parchment it was written upon. It shut the Old Man up, but gave him nothing. Still, all of this was academic unless I snuffed it and I had every intention of doing so. As you probably know, the real Will should have stuck it to Dumbledore and the whole lot of them."

"Understatement," Harry said. "Continue."

"Greatest prank I ever pulled," Sirius chuckled. "It even backfired on me seeing your - um - family there. But what's the fun in pulling a prank if you can't see the results of it? Damn problem with the whole plan, wasn't it? To stick it to the Old Man and ruin his plans I had to snuff it, didn't I? To save you, your sister, your estate and legacy of 2,000 years, to beat Dumbledore at his own game, I had to snuff it."

"And yet you didn't."

"It would seem that the news of my untimely demise was untimely," Sirius chuckled.

"That's him!" Mallory said. "The bastard might not have told me what he was up to, but he does give a whole new meaning to the term Black Humor!"

"Damn it! How did you survive?" Harry shouted.

"The Veil was the key," Sirius said. "Suicide missions are an oxymoron for the most part. True suicide missions are carried out by very disturbed if not totally crazy people. No sane person wants a hundred percent chance at death. There must be a chance - however slim or miniscule - that they can survive. Hence the Veil."

"That makes no sense at all!" Hermione said. "What I read was that it's an execution device!"

"Actually, it was meant to be an adjudication device," Sirius said. "Many of my ancestors worked in the Department of Mysteries and its predecessor before they became Lords Black. That Department is about research. Most of it is meaningless to most of us, but they have



been tasked on occasion to make something new and useful and the Veil was supposed to be just that. It was invented before someone else came up with Veritiserum. It was supposed to be an impartial way to determine guilt or innocence in capital offenses. The problem was and remains it's too bloody easy for a skilled wizard criminal to tamper with witnesses both during the commission of his crime and after. A witness could swear on their magic that they saw Wizard Joe snuff Wizard Able and no magic could prove them liars. But things such as polyjuice potion and other magical disguises would fool even the most observant and anyone skilled in the mind arts to alter memories to a degree where the true ones could never be known. Veritiserum is not considered useful with witnesses, only suspects. A witness sees what they saw. Only a suspect can confess and yet Veritiserum is really a recent development...

"The Veil was a simple idea, really. Your capital offender facing the Headsman's ax would be sent through it. If he were guilty of a capital offense, he'd be gone forever. If he were innocent, he'd simply pass through as if walking through an arch. The problem was it didn't work right. True, many sent through were never seen again. But those who did come back... They never noticed anything, but in this realm of existence they were gone for ages: weeks, month and even years and there was a side effect. Every magical oath they had taken, every magical contract they had ever entered into, every evidence of their original magical signature ceased to exist once they entered the Veil. They were declared dead and no magic known could prove otherwise until they returned by which time their estates had been passed off to their survivors, their wives widowed and in many cases remarried, their concubines rebonded to another or sold off..."

"They were dead in all meaningful respects," Hermione finished.

Sirius nodded. "No guarantee I could get to the Veil and even then it was a long shot deal. I'd probably have snuffed it proper or been summarily executed by Fudge and his lot first. As a Black, I could demand the Veil. Fudge may've conceded the point as to not do so would have lost him many Pureblood and Traditionalist votes. Couldn't count on that, could I? He's a right bastard that one. Then we learned of Voldie's obsession with the Department of Mysteries and such and I thought maybe, just maybe, I could get to the Veil. Set

things up just in case. Made myself Cyril Underhill with an account, a flat here in Pottersport, a car and all that lot just in case. Had I been caught there in the Ministry that night, I would've demanded the Veil rather than the Dementors.

"Then the real battle took hold and where would it be but in the Veil room. True, any one of those Death Eater bastards might've snuffed me with the Killing Curse or goodness knows what else. But I was fortunate to find myself facing dear old Cousin Bella..."

"Fortunate?" Harry asked. "She was a psycho!"

"And a Black and therefore she could not kill her Head of House without killing herself as well. Sometimes that Pureblood rubbish can truly bite them in the ass. Set myself up before the Veil. I'll admit, I was concerned she might try something really nasty. But it was just a stunner and I ... well obviously I passed through. Came out in that blasted room only a few days ago. Although I should point out, there was no guarantee I would pass through nor that I would at any given time. It might have been months or years from now before it happened if it did at all."

"Why didn't Remus or your - your image in my Grandfather's pensieve tell me this?"

"As for myself," Remus replied, "I knew the odds. It was highly unlikely Padfoot's plan to evade death would work at all. I knew about it. He told me just before we headed off to deal with the Death Eaters. But I knew it was such a long shot that there was little point in telling you. It was a one in a million chance, Harry."

"As for my image in the Pensieve," Sirius said, "he knew the same thing. Unless by some miracle I did make it to the Veil alive and pass through, there was little point. Moreover, he knew it might be years if ever if I did succeed."

"What does this mean?" Harry asked. "I mean Mallory and Dora and the House of Black."

"They are part of your Coven now," Remus said. "Nothing save their own death can change that. They are carrying your children and that will never change."

"Really?" Sirius asked choking up.

Harry nodded.

"Thank you, Harry," Sirius said. "It's what I wanted for them really. I wanted them to be happy and free of the potential problems with their bond to me - namely that they could still be sold off and such. Thank you!"

"As for the House of Black you are it's Head now. That can't be changed. The ring of my forefathers has chosen you as the Head."

"And ... and what about you?" Harry asked.

"The Ring has passed me by. I am a Black only if you say so but one without any rights of succession. I gave that up when I passed through the Veil and, in the eyes of magic, was ruled well and truly dead. But I did prepare. I set up an account here in Charenwell under my assumed name of Cyril Underhill. I can live the rest of my days quite comfortably on that account. Got a nice flat as well in Pottersport overlooking the harbor. I'll be fine as 'Cyril,' don't you worry."

"Are you still my Godfather?"

"By magic, no. That oath disappeared along with any others when I passed through the veil. In my heart, yes Harry. That is if you'd like me to be."

"I would," Harry said with tears in his voice.

A/N:

Sorry. Couldn't snuff Draco. He hasn't suffered enough. (insert Evil Grin here.) Yes, I always planned for Sirius to somehow cheat death. It had to happen after it was too late for anyone to truly go back.

## RELATIONSHIP SCORECARD:

If you didn't read the Intro, you missed that. This is so you can keep up with who's with who and how. Changes in abbreviated version are for change in bond status, birthdays and so on.

Key:

Names in Italics = OC

Gr – Gryffindor, Hu – Hufflepuff, Ra – Ravenclaw, Sl – Slytherin.

SG – St. George's School, PE – Prince Edward School, SA – St. Andrew's, SP – St. Patrick's, SD – St. David's. (Number indicates last year completed. No number means they finished all seven years.)

P = pregnant.

Harry James Potter, age 16.\* HOUSE POTTER

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

HOUSE BLACK

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Bill Weasley, age 25.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Neville Algicyrus Longbottom, age 16.\*

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Fred Weasley, age 18.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

George Weasley, age 18.

No change from last post - see Chapter 69.

Lord Mayor Remus John Lupin, age 36.

14. Paulette Kristen (Lee) Lupin, age 19 (PE).

Frank Longbottom, age 41.

2. Sandra Ellen (Butler) Longbottom, age 24 (SP).\*P

14. Nora Elizabeth (Jackson) Longbottom, age 20 (SD-5).

Charlie Weasley, age 23.

10. Samantha Anne (Wood) Weasley, age 17 (PE-5).

Arthur Percival Weasley, age 46 (4/12/50).

7. Amanda Suzanne (Tanner) Weasley, age 20 (SA-5).

\* - Indicates in flight training RDCAF.

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